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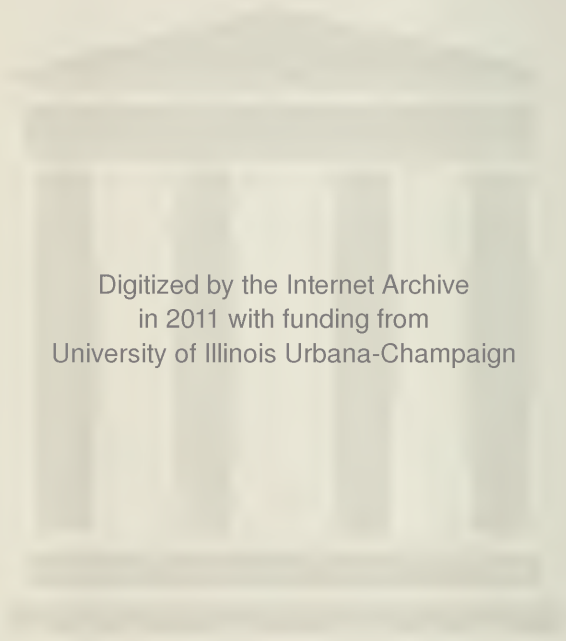
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THE CZAR.

THE CZAR

IVAN VASSILIVITCH, THE TERRIBLE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“MANUELLA, THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER, A STORY OF
MADRID;” “ANTONIO FOSCARINI,” &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

* Ich bin der Reußen herr und König
Meines and lichen Erbs benüßig
Hab von nyemot nichts erbetn noch gekhaufft
Bin in namen Gottes ain Christ getaufft.

* “Mauvais vers allemandes composés à ce que l'on assure par lui
même.” *Keramsin.*

VOL. II.

NEW EDITION,

(WITH PORTRAIT.)

EDWARD SMALLWOOD,
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17, OLD BOND STREET, LONDON.

MDCCCXL.

PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION

R U S S I A,

FROM THE DEATH OF IVAN IV.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE CZAR, IVAN VASSILIVITCH,” “MANUELLA, THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER,” “ANTONIO FOSCARINI,” &c.

J. Cunningham, Printer, Crown-court, Fleet-street.

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THE CZAR.

CHAPTER I.

“ Ultra Lapones in regione inter Corum, & Aquilonem perpetua oppressa caligine, Pygmeos reperiri, aliqui eximiæ fidei testes retulerunt, qui post \tilde{Q} ad summum adoleuerint, nostratis pueri denum annorum mensuram uix excedant meticulousum genus hominum & garritu sermonem exprimens, adeo ut tam Simiæ propinqui \tilde{Q} statura ai sensibus ab iustæ proceritatis homine remoti uideantur.”—See PAUL JOVE.

DAY was fast approaching, and in the district of the Kitaigorod, the scene around gave evidence of the active operations of artisans. Here and

there a noble edifice arose amidst the surrounding devastation, and the new city bid fair to rival the splendour of the old; which, but twelve months before, had been reduced to ashes. A few boors alone were to be seen. An arbas appeared in sight, drawn by four horses, which wended its way, without other obstruction than the materials for house building carelessly left, here and there, in the main road.

But a strange and unexpected impediment to its farther progress now presented itself. The horses, though weary with their lengthened journey, began to rear and plunge, and before means could be resorted to, to prevent the mischief, the carriage was overturned. The driver, paralysed by fear, was unable to manage the restive animals, a sudden panic having deprived him of all presence of mind.

On the extremity of a pole, which pro-

jected from the scaffolding of a new building, and which reached nearly half-way over the road, was perched a living object. It might not have attracted observation, but as the vehicle approached, it suddenly dropped its whole length, suspended from the beam, by what appeared to be a long tail, swinging its hideous, half-human shape to and fro, with the most extravagant gestures of arms and legs. It horrified the driver, and terrified the horses;—they began to plunge and kick, and the driver to invoke all the saints in the Greek calendar.

Our good merchant of Novogorod (for it was he) had much difficulty in extricating his daughter from her perilous situation, and was looking round for shelter, when the gate of a neighbouring house was opened, and a person advanced towards them.

Approaching the party, and observing a fe-

male, who appeared to have fainted, and whom the servants were carrying from the road, without further ceremony he assisted in conveying her to his dwelling, requesting the merchant to follow, who, half-stunned with the recent overthrow, seemed scarcely to have recovered his faculties. He led the way, and entered, bearing in his arms the young girl, who was apparently unconscious of all that passed. The merchant followed mechanically. Ascending a flight of steps, they entered an apartment, which, at any other time, would have excited both curiosity and admiration in the Muscovite, but at that moment, all his attention was engrossed by the situation of his child, whilst the assiduities bestowed upon her, in the stranger's dwelling, were such as to inspire him with trust and gratitude.

Yet it needed some philosophy in an orthodox Muscovite of that day, to overlook the

enormity of being housed, where the images of Greek worship, the eternal Bogh, were not affixed to the walls of the apartment, with small lamps burning before them, for of such there were none in the stranger's abode. All he saw, in his anxiety for his child, were the hospitable attentions she received, and as she seemed to recall her wandering senses, the merchant looked with surprise and delight on the solicitude of a young girl, who assisted with evident concern in the care bestowed upon his daughter.

The interesting stranger was tall, though very young, and fair, if the sudden contrast of her pure and snowy skin, to her dark hair, might be so called. But why describe any peculiar style of beauty? There are spirits that shine through this earthly tenement of clay, revealed in gesture, look, and voice, that beggar the powers of the painter and the poet. These may describe

the mortal, but the lovely English girl seemed a creature of angelic mould. Albeit she was of this world, however much she had borrowed from a better; and though we may have an opportunity in these desultory pages of tracing from her actions some clue to the heavenly purity of her gentle mind, we will now confine ourselves to her outward semblance.

She was younger than she appeared to be, for much of mind and character had developed themselves, and shone forth on her polished brow, and in her graceful and dignified deportment; there was a speaking lustre in her eye, the pure effulgence of her thought that had something more than speech in its eloquence, so bountifully had nature dealt with her:—if the sum of her perfections had been meted out in an ordinary degree, they would have enriched a monarch's court. The charm was increased, when her voice, in sweet melody, broke like

softest music on the ear. As a climax to the description, the conviction of the Muscovite merchant was, as he gazed upon her lovely form, that she rivalled his own beloved Marfa.

The preliminaries of an acquaintance between the Russian and his host were speedily gone through, and Dr. Wilmington, with his accustomed hospitality, welcomed the Muscovite, and his daughter, to such accommodation as his house afforded.

When Marfa Sabakin became more composed, she gradually looked round to take a survey of things wholly strange to her, but continually returned to the contemplation of one object—the lovely girl at her feet. Their eyes met in mutual admiration—it was in adoration of Heaven's works; they looked upon each other, for Marfa was beautiful, and Grace not less so, though essentially different. Their

guileless hearts had not been tainted with the corroding passions of jealousy and envy. They were yet free, generous, unsuspecting—Grace, as she dwelt in rapture on the countenance of her guest, thought her the loveliest of her sex. Marfa looked upon Grace almost as something more than mortal, and silence, in those moments, held involuntary sway over them. Grace passed her taper fingers through the bright tresses of Marfa's hair; and Marfa held her breath, lest it should diminish the lustre of a cheek so fair as that of Grace. She marked her dress, too. It was not so costly as her own; it was not strictly Russian; but she liked it best. Both their hearts were full of the purest affections of the human race, and, like kindred souls, each looked upon the other admiring that which unconsciously was her own, yet to behold which was so novel to them, that it was

with ever new delight they contemplated such sweet perfections.

The cause of the disaster which had thrown the merchant and his daughter on the hospitality of the physician was not alluded to, for the anxiety of Sabakin for his child's recovery, and the interest felt by both for the charming individual who bestowed such unremitting attentions had hitherto engrossed their thoughts.

Meanwhile the news of the accident had spread, and with it that of the diabolical cause of the disaster.

The driver solemnly attested to the apparition of his Satanic Majesty, and the remainder of the servants had magnified his presence, until the whole of the inhabitants of the Kitaigorod were duly informed that the entire court of Satan infested the vicinage of the Englisher.

Whatever might have been the reflections of

Sabakin on the subject, we are not prepared to say. He had been left to himself in the outer apartment, the young ladies having closeted themselves in Grace's withdrawing room, and Master Walter had taken his departure on professional duties.

The day was growing bright and sunny, and Sabakin approached the casement to take a survey of the prospect, when it was opened from without, and a living monster appeared.

The merchant gasped with astonishment and fear. In the course of trade he had had interviews with Laplanders, Samoiedes, and the most ill-favoured bipeds of the Czardom: but the subject that now presented himself surpassed them all in deformity, his pigmy stature was inferior even to theirs. The intruder in no way forgot his manners, and eschewing the rude stare of the merchant, vaulted with remarkable

agility, without deigning to touch the floor, from the window to the table, thence into a seat, and placed himself opposite to Sabakin.

Whatever were the surmises of the Muscovite on the first apparition of this extraordinary personage, they were exchanged for certainty, when, at the very first spring he made, a certain appendage to his person was exhibited; and now no longer doubting the character of the vision which had occasioned the wreck of his travelling equipage, and which he had treated at the time as an illusion, a cold sweat suddenly bedewed his limbs, and trembling, he sank upon his knees.

And now he bitterly repented having entered the house of the heretic. No sainted image was there to exorcise the evil spirit; and, to his horror, as he assumed that attitude of sacred devotion, the evil one imitated him as closely as his deformity would allow, turning his invo-

cations into contempt, by horrid sounds and blasphemous jargon.

Agonised, incapable of motion or articulation, the lips of the Russian rapidly moved in inward prayer, whilst his eyes, fascinated by the tempter, rested on the enormous jaws of that hideous countenance, chattering with every variety of contortion, to which the frightful furrows and wrinkles of his skin added multiplied grimace.

Overcome with mental anguish, the senses of Sabakin gradually gave way, and he fell at full length, giving himself up for lost.

How long he might have remained in that state, it would be impossible to say. The poor Christian's mind certainly underwent the ordeal of purgatory, however the articles of his belief might deny the existence of such a state. For as he lay, he was just sufficiently conscious that the persecutor of the human race was busy about

his person, and imagined that he was about to undergo those torments which are assigned as the hereafter of the impenitent wicked.

And truly master Jocko no sooner beheld him quiet and unresisting, than he took a leisurely survey of the merchant's costume. The first object was his cap, which, without hesitation, he transferred to his own sconce; whilst the poor Russian underwent pangs as great as if he felt the fall of the headsman's axe. He then gave an envious pull at the innumerable small metal buttons affixed to his garment; and Sabakin, resigned to his fate, mentally experienced those exquisite tortures entailed as a just retribution upon the sins and peccadilloes of poor mortals, by nature frail, imperfect, and easily led astray. He needed not, in that agonising moment, any of those philanthropic inventions of the exquisite Bomelius, for the amusement of his bosom friend, the Czar, such as

being hanged to a gibbet by a hook dragged through the ribs, or being suspended by the feet, or receiving, alternately, cold and boiling water upon the brain, and a variety of other delectable methods of "shuffling off this mortal coil," too numerous to mention.

But the term of the unfortunate Muscovite's sufferings was at an end, for the door now opened, and the servants of the merchant entered.

"The Lord deliver us!" they ejaculated, when they beheld their prostrate master, and the fiend who had appeared to them on the point of the scaffolding, triumphantly squatted on his body, wearing the cap of their liege lord. And such a confusion of exclamations and invocations arose, that Pug, with a politeness which seemed to be wanting in the company, modestly retired; and to the gaping wonderment of the beholders, with much gentleness,

and desirable alacrity, made his exit in the same way by which he had effected his entry, only an instant before the ladies, who were drawn to the spot by the uproar, entered the room.

CHAPTER II.

“ Las doncellas, que desean llegar à tan alta fortuna de ser esposas del principe, procuran para agradarle, buscar todos los adornos, y composturas, que las son posibles, y luego, que entra, se arrojan todas por su orden à sus pies.”—HIST. DE MOSCOVIA Y VIDA DE SUS CZARES PAR DON MANUEL DE VILLEGAS Y PINATELI EN MADRID : 1736.

IT was daybreak, and sleep was still a stranger to the Boyarinia. The visit of the patriarch had haunted her, and a long waking dream, full of all the portentous events which now seemed to await her, had denied her the slightest repose. Feverish she rose from her couch, and proceeded to superintend the toilette of Katinka for the Czar's inspection, which was to take place that morning. When completed, the

young lady was again transferred to the halls of the Kremlin, and consigned to the matrons appointed to receive the maiden candidates for the royal spouse.

The Boyarinia now resumed the thread of her speculations, until her liege lord, who had been on duty that night at the palace, entered the apartment, and to Gregoriovna's alarm, wore a somewhat lengthened and rueful countenance.

It was customary with the Boyar to reserve to himself any ill-tidings, in which her ladyship's participation would avail him nothing; for it had become one of the connubial practices of that high-born lady, to vent, without remorse, the first burst of spite, anger, or mortification, upon that butt of her sex, her patient spouse, however undeserving and innocent he might be of the cause of her displeasure; and as it rarely happened that the chancellor thought any communication concerning the welfare of their

house could be safely withheld from her, so in proportion were the domestic storms his grey hairs were doomed to weather.

With a due estimation of the hurricane that he was about to bring upon himself on the present occasion, Basmanoff's precautionary monosyllables in introducing the subject, had a very contrary effect to that which they bargained for; and the lady's wrath was pitched at once in the highest key, as she thundered out the command for him to leave off "his humming and haaing, and begin."

"Our brave boy," he commenced.

"We know that—is he not *my* son?" interrupted the wife; "go on!"

"Our brave boy, by intelligence which has reached the palace, was last night surprised on the high road, some versts from the city, by an army of banditti, and he and all his detachment of the Opritchnina were incarcerated in the cellar of a common inn!"

At these words, all appearance of anger towards her liege lord vanished. The lady was concerned for things of more importance, and a deeper shade of anxiety settled on her features.

“Indeed!” she, however, calmly replied; “and pray in what pursuit was our beloved Theodore engaged when he exposed himself to the attacks of the marauders?” she further added, to discover, if possible, whether her husband, or any one at the palace, suspected the real motive of his adventure.

“Truly a most noble one,” said the old Boyar, brightening up, as the tones of his wife’s voice softened into their wonted sweetness; “a most praiseworthy object, and one likely to advance him in the Czar’s favour; for hearing that this far-famed beauty was hourly expected, he sallied forth to her rencontre, to give her honourable escort.”

The Boyarinia was herself again.

“But how comes it that he fell in with the

banditti? Did the lady escape?—is she arrived?” were the hurried inquiries now made by his wife.

“Nay, there is the mystery of it. For it seems the damsel was already under the protection of our worthy son, when they were surprised by that infamous Koltzo, under sentence of death some time ago, and who has now resumed his depredations in the vicinity; tidings have arrived that, not satisfied with plundering the cortège of the said damsel, he has, moreover, carried her off.”

Alternately grave and smiling, the conclusion of the story successfully fixed the placidity of her countenance, and now having leisure for motherly tenderness, she made fond inquiries after Theodore.

“By this time he is, no doubt, released from thralldom. Maluta Skuratoff is dispatched with a strong force to his succour.”

“Now to business, dear Alexis,” changing at

once her tone and theme. "The metropolitan Philip, that audacious churchman, has dared to interfere with the privacy of our house. Last night he came upon a message from some crafty and designing wretches, who would rob us of our beloved daughter, Katinka; and the insolent priest offered, if I would give up all title to her, to hush up the mystery, nay, to intercede with the Czar for pardon of the deception."

"'Tis very strange!" was the thoughtful remark of Basmanoff. "I have often been puzzled in dwelling upon her countenance, to trace a resemblance to the family. Thou mightest have been mistaken," hesitatingly observed the Boyar.

"Dolt! idiot! wouldst thou imply," retorted the Boyarinia, as she summoned a semblance of indignation, "that the child is none of thine? Art *thou*, too, leagued with the serpent to rob me of my offspring? nay, more, to throw a doubt upon the honour of thy wife?"

“ I say not that.”

“ Then hush thee for ever, unless thy lips can open without profanation. ‘ ’Tis a filthy bird that fouls its own nest.’ Mark me ! this errand of the arch-priest has meaning, more than thy shallow brain can fathom. The rumour is abroad that Katinka, the daughter of the Basmanoffs, transcends in beauty all that Muscovy can produce for the Czar’s choice. Now, dost perceive ? this old priest is bribed to enforce the claim of some designing villains, who seek to father thy child, for the appanage of the Czarina’s crown. Dost see it ? but now the plot confirms my aspiring hopes ; and this intriguing device, got up upon the seeming certainty of her election, brings with its infamy, conviction of my child’s success. Yet, ’twere ingratitude for such promising fortune not to thwart the aim of villany, that enviously would step between us and our triumph, and snatch away the prize. We should deserve, if we would

have, the boon. This prelate, good husband, must be put aside."

"What! Philip, the metropolitan? He who, of all Russians, dares singly to meet the monarch, and brave him 'midst his satellites? Ivan Vassilivitch dreads,—shuns the austere chief of the church."

"Well!" interposed the Boyarinia, as a smile of satisfaction pervaded her countenance.

"Wouldst thou attempt the destruction of him the Czar dare not lay a hand upon? Even now, to propitiate the church for his nuptials, he sends largesses to the stubborn prelate to gloss over the repudiation of his wife."

"Now art thou but a cypher, husband, if thou seize not the propitious moment. Dost think the frigid monk, whose narrow mind is bounded, as the horizon of his native Solovky, will sanction the worldly excesses of a sovereign? The religious dotard, in his sanctified ambition, would claim the crown of martyrdom. The mo-

ment is opportune, and Heaven itself crowns all my projects with victory. The Czar will marry! What follows? That the stumbling-block in his path must be removed. All we have to do is to precipitate the event. But here comes my son. We will confer with him on this matter. Do thou but follow in our steps, and I am not his mother if the white mitre of metropolitan is on the brow of Philip many days longer."

Theodore Basmanoff made a very different appearance from that of the preceding evening. His dress was in disorder; his moustache and beard seemed to partake of the discomfiture of his apparel. His countenance was haggard and pale, even his eye lacked its usual lustre; and a recklessness of deportment completed the dismal picture.

Throwing himself at full length upon one of the benches that surrounded the apartment, his sullen manner betokened no disposition for

communication, and his mother needed all the bright prospects which the horizon of her fortunes now displayed, not to be infected with the woe-begone aspect of her son; but cheerfully accosting him—

“Think no more of this, Theodore,” she said, soothingly; “thy betters have ere now been assaulted by freebooter Cossacques. Nay, ’tis not long since, a whole army of brave Russians, headed by our warlike Voyvodes, was cut to pieces by these audacious robbers, led on by that notorious Koltzo, on whose head a price is set.”

“Koltzo, didst thou say? Why, mother, ’tis the very ruffian who has defeated us, and stolen away this rival of Katinka for the hand of the Czar.”

“My poor boy! I shall never teach thee wisdom. Hadst thou invoked all the saints to favour thy adventure, and they had all lent a helping hand, the affair could not have turned

out more favourably. I'll be sworn that by this time the ferocious robber, Koltzo, is far on the road to the marshes of the Volga, and the wench in a fair way to become the mother of a small fry of Cossacques. Providence has a hand in it; for it really was preposterous to think that this upstart stall-keeper's child should have pranked it among the nobles of the land as the wife of Russia's Czar."

"Stall-keeper's child! sayest thou, mother? Go, offer thy thanksgiving that she is not of the muster; for, of a verity, not thine, nor all the beauty of Russia's daughters leagued to match her, would have made up the amount of her charms. Perdition seize the Cossacque! I tell thee, mother, she has no rival but angels, for she is one. O! I am duped of more wealth than the walls of the Kremlin encircle, with all those ranks of lovely forms aspiring to a crown. Marfa Sabakin! thou wast made for love; and I too feel it, like a torrent, invade my breast,

rush to my heart, storm my senses—for I worship thee! And, dread thought! my rival is a bandit—a condemned felon—skulking for plunder; and this highwayman, face to face, has torn from my grasp a treasure of such price, that life itself is valueless, and I care not to live!”

If the Boyarinia was for a moment confounded by the rhapsody of her son, she found in it only new grounds for congratulation on her schemes, and suffered him to vent his mortification uninterruptedly.

She was now far off again upon her own imaginary road to fortune and power, trusting, as she bestowed a momentary thought upon her son, that his disappointment on the subject of this frenzied passion would evaporate in fruitless regrets, as she in no wise wished at present that the divinity of his worship were any nearer to the Kremlin than Heaven.

— Meanwhile we leave the trio to cogitate on projects and plans which, in a more digested state, we may introduce to the reader. Coeval events occupy our next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

“ Le métropolitain s'étant aperçu qu'un de ceux-ci avait eu l'effronterie de se mettre une calotte sur la tête s'arreta, et saisi d'indignation; il en avertit le monarque; mais déjà le soldat avait enlevé et caché sa calotte. On persuada au tzar que cette accusation était un conte forgé à plaisir pour exciter le peuple contre ses favoris, et ce prince oubliant toute bienséance, insulta publiquement le métropolitain, le traita d'imposteur, de séditieux, de scélerat,” &c.—KARANSIN.

A SEMBLANCE of religion cloaked the actions of Ivan. It was in the name of the Almighty that every excess was committed, and he tortured his subjects into the belief that compulsion dictated every atrocity. Thus, though he had long ceased to appeal to the church for sanction, it was in the name of God that he outraged every human, as well as divine law,

and few were the slaves who dared to raise a murmur.

Philip, the metropolitan, was one upon whom all practices of intimidation were lost. The Czar had threatened, but the subject for once had not trembled; and it was now the despot's turn to fear the prelate, for the churchman was throned in the hearts of the people.

Since the morning, however, on which Philip had refused him his benediction, Ivan had refrained from molesting the priest. He conjectured that reflection would subdue the metropolitan, and make manifest the danger of his opposition, and thereby he would have the sanction of the chief of the church to his nuptials. He endeavoured to ingratiate himself with Philip, in the hope that the priest would be fully conscious that rebellion against his desires would be followed by the retribution of a despot.

Thus, on the morning that was to decide his

choice of a new Czarina, he was betimes mounting horse, and, attended by a dashing squadron of the Opritchnina, alighted at the cathedral; and without any regard or respect for the sacred functions in which he was engaged, most unceremoniously presented himself to the metropolitan. His body-guard, on the way thither, had been joined by Basmanoff the younger, who entered the church much in the fashion of his sovereign.

It was a solemn moment of the Greek ritual. The archimandrites and servants of the altar were formed in procession, to walk the round of the holy edifice, when the Czar faced the metropolitan.

“We come to invite thee to the nuptial feast. Priest, thy duty calls thee to perform the holy rite, for we this day elect our queenly bride.”

The body-guard of the monarch were ruffians,

licensed to commit every enormity. Some of them, in mockery of the priesthood, wore black cassocks, and the high caps of the clergy, and mimicked the sacred rites of the church.

Philip, pale with sorrow and indignation, turned his glance full upon the profaners of the temple: it silenced the profligates. But of their number was one of lofty bearing and handsome person, on whom his reproofing eye had no effect. It was Theodore Basmanoff. At that moment, the worthy companion of the Opritchnina had, in derision of the holy man, placed on his head the consecrated calotte.

The old prelate, roused at the insult, turned to the Czar, to call his attention to the outrage. But the guilty scoffer had already concealed the sacred emblem of religious vows; and there were those who were ready enough to insinuate, that it was a fabrication of the priest's to excite the populace against his favourites.

But the prelate was not to be intimidated, and in a solemn voice he proclaimed them guilty of profanation.

Ivan boiled with fury. The offence offered to his favourite guard was offered to himself; and readily seizing the pretext that it was a false accusation, to excite the populace against his minions, he insulted the venerable patriarch with every abusive epithet. But the crowd, the vulgar beings that looked up to a God of mercy, and worshipped his holy ministers, surrounded their pastor, and the Czar felt the power of a master spirit in the venerable presence of the righteous man.

“Think not,” said Philip, “that, in the performance of my sacred charge, I fear thee, or death. I have now reached a very old age with honour. A stranger to worldly ambition, intrigue, and disgraceful passions, I have no higher wish than to render up my soul to Him, who is alike thy sovereign and mine. Prepared

for martyrdom, in opposing thy decrees, I obey those of a higher tribunal. Take back the pastoral crook, the white mitre, and the mantle of high-priest, with which honours thou didst invest me. I would rather restore them to thee unsullied, at the cost of life, than wear them for one hour with a stain."

The last words were not heard by the Czar. A glance revealed to his myrmidons the doom of Philip; yet, quelled before the only subject whose sainted life his impetuous wrath dared not openly attack, he sprang to horse, and at a furious pace returned to the Kremlin, resolved upon removing from his path the inflexible churchman, and upon setting at defiance an authority which had too long been a curb to the despots of Muscovy.

But it was by no means the intention of the Czar that the holy man should have the glory of being persecuted for his virtues. Long since he had commissioned spies to repair to the

isolated monastery, which Philip had sanctified by a long life of holiness, before he had been called to his present high estate. They were instructed to bribe, to threaten, to caress the monks of Solovky, in order to induce them to calumniate their late prior ; but in vain. Not one voice was raised to detract from the virtues of Philip. Baffled till now, and writhing under the sense of the invulnerable bulwark of the holy priest's life-long character of spotlessness, his glance opportunely fell upon his favourite, Theodore Basmanoff. The priest, within the hour, had denounced him for profaning God's temple ; and now he conjectured that a feeling of animosity, corresponding with his own, towards the hated churchman, had arisen in his minion's breast.

Arrived at the palace, Theodore Basmanoff had the honour of being closeted for some time with the despot. Nor, to propitiate the favourite, was a plea wanting, to invest that gallant officer

of the Opritchnina with new honours and rewards. He had voluntarily faced danger to protect the convoy of a lady summoned to abide his choice ; and though defeated, the intent had proved his devotion. The task that was now imposed upon him, was the removal of a common enemy, the chief of the Muscovite church. Unlimited authority was placed in the hands of a rash youth, to ruin the venerable patriarch, to tamper with the first wretch who would sell his soul for gold to vilify and murder him.

If the young Boyar was still smarting under the indignity which had been put upon him by the condemned outlaw, the Cossacque Koltzo—if he was still writhing under the more galling mortification of the escape of Marfa Sabakin, some consolation was afforded him in the favourable tidings he had now to bear to the ambitious Boyarinia, his mother. Commissioned by the autocrat himself to deal with the meddling priest, whatever might have

been prognosticated of future grandeur to him by the visionary Lady Basmanoff, certain it is, that the life of the second dignitary of the realm being left at his disposal, roused in his breast feelings worthy the school in which he had been tutored; and well pleased was this ready instrument to participate in the awful power usurped by his merciless monarch.

Of the capabilities of Basmanoff for the duty with which he was intrusted, we shall judge hereafter. That it was no ordinary task, even under the reign of Ivan the Terrible, to accomplish the downfall of a virtuous priest, is a redeeming page of Russia's history. Not without consulting and advising with the petticoat ruler of the house of Basmanoff, did its promising heir proceed to operations, and the result of the conference was Theodore's immediate departure from Moscow.

And now, as the hour approached which was to confirm the choice of the Czar, the noble

matron, suitably accompanied, repaired to the Kremlin, in her high capacity of first lady of honour, an appointment she had intrigued for with success, and which opened an avenue to her Machiavelian disposition.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Il compara long-temps leur beauté, leurs graces, leur esprit.” — KARAMSIN.

“ De estas la que mejor le ha parecido la toma por esposa.” — HIST. DE MOSCOVIA, POR DON. M DE VILLEGAS Y PINATELI EN MADRID : 1736.

THE day that dawned to witness a new Czarina, was bright and smiling. Through the antiquated casements of the palace, the light of heaven shone on the virgin brows that vied for earthly glory : with more than earthly beauty, their vivid glances met the rays of the sun. The maid of Kazan returned in softened gleams the heaven-born light, yet

not with lessened lustre. Tcherkessia's virgin faced the golden ray, in looks refulgent, as though her eye had caught the dazzling beam reflected from the snow-clad peak of Caucasus; whilst Passion's flower, from the Caspian shore, recalled the never-dying fires, nursed by the Gheber's worship, on the brow of Bakoo's rock.

The Phidian nose and classic brow bespoke the queen-like beauty of the Tcherkessian race. Her costume, half warlike, as the Amazons, from whom her country claimed descent, displayed the silver corslet, in compass not more than a span—pledge of virginity from childhood, to be removed only by the lawful lord of the bridal chamber.

Less brilliant, though not less enchanting, were the soft blue eyes of the Russian maid, Eudoxia Sabourof. She had been summoned from her humble home, to swell the pageant of beauty, and, faith! there were none lovelier there

than she; and though lowliest in rank, the honour had not awakened one spark of ambition in her maiden thought, for all her quick beating heart brought there, to witness the glory of the Czar, was fear.

Yet was the obscure citizen's child arrayed in a splendour becoming the occasion, and according with the ambitious hopes of her kinsfolk. A *telogreyky* of rich blue damask was tastily ornamented down the front with filigree work of silver, and her *opachen* robe, which was of gold stuff, was gracefully confined to her waist, whilst the hanging sleeves, not being used, fell gracefully back from her shoulder, over which was a cape, whereon exquisite embroidery had been lavished. Her fair hair was confined round her brows by a bandeau, enriched with pearls, and in two plaited tresses, would have touched the ground, but that the heels of her jewelled slippers, which seemed

only an apology, so small were the feet they protected, added some inches to her height.

Of such was the galaxy of beauty that dazzled the sight of the monarch, as he entered that ancient saloon of the Kremlin, accompanied by the Czarevitch, his physician, Bomelius, and a train of favourites. At his appearance, one and all prostrated themselves, thus paying homage to the mortal master of their existence and will.

Unenvied greatness! short-sighted power! for that free fount, whence comes the noble gift of voluntary affection, by such abject tribute, is dried up, and robs the despot's crown of that bright jewel, which enriches even the poor peasant's heart, with a gem above all price, woman's unbidden, unpurchased love.

The trembling beauties, when permitted, raised their virgin forms, and met the fastidious, but sensual, gaze of the Czar. Love! Heavén-born love! first link of that bright chain that

connects us with immortality—and which, in its blissful and soul-inspiring purity, is a panacea for the woes of earth—how wert thou abused and profaned, in that licentious survey, to be outraged still further, by the mockery of that sacred rite that should bind us to virtue.

Reclining on cushions, the Czar received the lovely competitors, the *élite* of the vast realms over which he reigned. The voluptuary's glances were fixed in succession upon every flower of that garland of beauty, yet undecided where to bestow his preference. Again he surveyed, he scrutinized the lovely band of Russia's fairest daughters, till his ecstatic imagination would have blended them into one bright bouquet for possession, and his intoxicated senses wandered in indecision. Musing for a time, no word escaped him. At length he summoned the attendant matrons, and bade the blooming girls retire, commanding the at-

tendance of each in turn, that, by conversation, he might appreciate the mental qualities of the competitors, which, in his bewildered choice, might give weight to beauty.

The first led to his presence was a dark-browed girl, from the recently conquered city of Kazan. Her features were of the Oriental cast. Her large, full eye, dilated with the consciousness of beauty, rolled in light, which tinged with fire the jet lashes, and cast a brightness o'er her countenance. Her rounded limbs tapered to hands and feet of diminutive proportions, and the garb she wore, refulgent with gems, sparkled, 'til the dazzled gaze of the critic, tired with the perfection of nature and art, sought in vain to discover a fault.

Invited, by the Czar, to be seated beside him, the monarch courteously bade her display the powers of her voice, and the maid of Kazan replied.

THE SONG OF THE MAID OF KAZAN.

A truant bright Houri, one day,
Of lovers with wings was disgusted ;
For, very inconstant were they,
And the flutt'ers no longer she trusted.

Tho' the forfeit she knew were the spheres,
Without swains she vow'd Heaven a bore,
So she gives them the slip, and appears
Upon earth, as a sinner of yore.

Yet enough she had pilfered from Heaven,
To fix the first mortal she met,
And a beau in a twinkling was driven,
To madden with love in her net.

He thought her an angel,—no wonder,
For she was just come from the skies ;
And he vow'd by the lightning and thunder,
That Heaven was in her bright eyes.

As he spoke, to the spheres of the blest
Were raised her full glances of fire,
As if she invoked all the rest,
A swain, *without* wings, to admire.

“ O lift not those eyes ! I implore,”
With passion, her lover now cried,
“ For angels were tempted of yore
To seek a terrestrial bride.

“ And O, should they see those bright eyes !
I fear ’twould entice them again,
To come in a freak from the skies,
And supplant in thy love thy true swain.”

The lost Houri, enraptured, replied,
As her wings she displayed, “ Hush thy fears !
That Heaven now forfeits thy bride,
For Earth, with its smiles and its tears.”

The music of the songstress yet delighted the ear of the autocrat, as he amorously entwined his fingers in the tresses of her hair, and exclaimed, “ The Houri is thyself, the mortal—” But he paused, and bethought himself of the lovely pretenders who vied in beauty with his present charmer. Summoning attendants, he commanded another to be brought as the Kazan maiden was led away.

Another, and another, in turn, displayed the variety of loveliness and grace, each worthy in herself to wear a crown, were it the meed of beauty.

At length appeared the daughter of the Bas-

manoffs. From an adjoining chamber the Boyarinia had watched the exit and entrance of each successive beauty, as in turn they were conducted into the presence of the Czar. She had counted the minutes, the seconds, that had stolen the attention of the monarch. A thousand vindictive feelings were at work, as each innocent beauty crossed her path; and she sought to fathom in their blushes, to read in their downcast looks, as they left the presence, the result of the conference. It were vain to attempt to describe the agony produced by the protracted interview of the maid of Kazan; and when the silver notes of her voice in song reached her attentive ear, it was as the knell of death to her ambitious hopes; for now, with power and almost royalty in her grasp, in her eagerness for success, she began almost to doubt her child's perfections.

Katinka was this day a striking contrast to the painted effigy that bore her name the pre-

ceding one. Her pale cheek, however, gave indication of suffering ; and, perhaps, in that task which ambition had set her to perform, she had undergone both mental and physical exertion too great for her young frame. She had been made to feel that the mother's solicitude regarded more the dazzling prize that was held out to the fairest of all the beauty of Russia, than the individual happiness of her child, and, upon that slender chance, appeared to rest her claim on the affection of her parents.

She was unquestionably lovelier, since nature had presided instead of art at her toilette ; for although her face was pale, it was of a soft transparency, that contrasted well with the beautiful hair, and eyebrows that matched it, traced in jet, with lashes that swept, in her downcast looks, like the smallest fibres of the feather of the raven, on her white and delicate cheek.

Her costume threw a radiance around her.

A fortune of gems braided her sarafan, from her neck to her feet. A lofty tiara, the ground of which was crimson, was encrusted with brilliants and emeralds; and a veil, fastened to its summit, fell in folds of variegated gold and silver, of such exquisite, yet gossamer-like, texture, that it rather enriched than concealed the charms on which it lay. The small red boots, reaching to the ankle, were slashed with gold, and pointed with emeralds; and the high heels were cased in filigree-work of silver, ornamented with ruby and turquoise.

In painful suspense, the Boyarina at first had awaited the interview of her child with her monarch. Her strong mind had been worked upon by varied and intense emotions; and as if fate had ordained her to undergo the ordeal of suspense to its climax, her daughter was the last who was admitted to the presence. Nor could she disguise to herself, as each lovely form

passed before her to that tribunal of their charms, that Muscovy had indeed yielded a galaxy of beauty.

If the anguish of suspense had been painful to her during the interview of each competitor for the crown, her excitement grew almost to madness whilst Katinka underwent the ordeal which she fondly hoped would raise her to the throne.

Near as she could, she approached the door, the threshold of which Katinka was to re-pass as the chosen bride of Russia's emperor. The *doumnoi dvorianin*, in their costly robes, with the keys of their office, sought to impose restraint. In vain the guard of the *Heyducks*, the *Stolniki*, the *Straptchi*, in their exalted office, reminded her that she passed the bounds. She heeded none of that pompous array, every moment seemed to elevate her nearer the throne; for that protracted interview

she deemed the certain pledge of her daughter's triumph; and the ambitious Boyarina, whose anxious hopes had lengthened short minutes into imaginary hours of suspense, looked down upon the proud array of the sovereign's counsellors and dignitaries, as if they owed her the homage due to the mother of their Czarina.

But little conviction was needed for such a sanguine mind to crown the ideal conquest of the Lady Gregoriovna's child. A few moments more, composure sat upon her countenance. An affable smile was bestowed around her, a patronising glance; and perceiving some of her dependants waiting to congratulate her, the noble Boyarina condescendingly informed them that they now addressed the mother of their Czarina.

A little whisper travelled along the corridors of the palace, and found its way to the open air.

Now it was a murmur; it reached the expectant crowd at the gates, and then, by a thousand channels, was conveyed to the remotest suburbs of Moscow. It proclaimed Katinka Basmanoff empress of Russia.

CHAPTER V.

“ Young men and maids are not suffered to see, much less to have any conversation with one another, so as to talk of marriage. It is transacted by way of brokeridge, so that it is no difficult matter to put a counterfeit upon the bridegroom, provided the parents do but consent to it; in the same manner as *Laban* put the bleer-eyed *Leah* upon *Jacob*.”—CRULL'S MUSCOVY. London, 1698.

WITHIN the boundary wall of the Kremlin was congregated a motley multitude, the occasion having called forth all the beldames and matron of the metropolis. A class of old ladies, very necessary to the Russian community, in their avocation of mediatrix, composed a formidable knot of gossips, amongst the various groups, who awaited the first intelligence of the Czar's

election of a bride, and with justice, were looked up to as the fountain of all knowledge in matrimonial speculation. These benevolent agents for parties wishing to contract in the lottery of man and wife, were, in the opinion of marriageable young ladies, more indispensable than any officers in his majesty's dominions, for they were walking advertisements of their charms, their property, and their pretensions.

Now, it may well be supposed that such a sweeping muster of the most marketable of their stock in trade, as the Czar had ordered for his individual inspection, had caused a panic amongst these brokers, and that they awaited with much anxiety his majesty's election; as neither sale nor transfer could be made of such of the candidates as were on their books, until it was precisely known who was, and who was not, to be Czarina.

Meanwhile they solaced themselves by betting upon the chances of their favourites, and,

by making some important transfers of such ladies on their lists as had not been thought worthy of being included in the imperial catalogue, and who fetched unusually high prices, in consequence of the scarcity of the article, the supply being, by no means, equal to the demand.

“Sister,” said one, who, to judge by her fat cheeks, seemed to carry on a thrifty trade, “here’s a decided bargain. Hast a husband for her? Fifteen years—not a day more, plump as a partridge, sound as a roach. Not a speck—has, in hard cash, two-and-twenty roubles, and a wardrobe fit for a Boyarishnia.”

Her companion, however, had observed a messenger of the palace coming on towards them.

“A grivna for the news, brother.”

“It’s worth a ducat, my old Jewess,” said the official.

“ So, 'tis decided then? and who is she?”

“ My grandmother.”

“ Out with thee for a pagan dog,” said the disappointed mediatrix, as she resumed her traffic.

“ To be had cheap,” she continued, calling the attention of her companions, “ a widow, something the worse for wear—lost a front tooth, wants a home—good temper—stand beating—”

“ That's a clencher, sister,” interrupted her neighbour; “ for since these Nemschiks, these foreigners, have got a footing in Moscow, the wenches think they can love their husbands without it. But it won't do, and I tell them so—sad times these. I remember when my good husband was alive, I had the stick as regularly as my meals; there's nothing like it for warming your love, it's so tantalizing.”

What further praise she might have bestowed on these *striking* reminiscences of matrimonial

drilling is not known, for at that moment the attention of these lady-brokers was absorbed by a rumour that Katinka Basmanoff was the chosen bride. But speculation was busy on the event; and in some way or other, to serve their various purposes, the agitators contradicted it, giving the names of others, so that before the reports were sobered down, they had, collectively, awarded to our terrible hero as many wives as Blue Beard.

If the length of time during which the daughter of the Boyarinia Basmanoff was detained by the Czar was the criterion of his preference, assuredly the speculative lady had reason to hope.

But the fickle Czar now experienced the embarrassment of too great a choice. His capricious heart would have embraced them all, and fixed the one diadem upon the twelve brows. Now the twinkling feet of some sylph-like charmer fascinated his gaze; and now it was the

syren note of woman's voice ravished his ear. Here 'twas the languishing, yet loving, glance of a blue-eyed maid; there 'twas the lightning of Asiatic eyes of jet.

Bewildered, intoxicated with beauty en-masse, it seemed that if one jewel were snatched away, a charm were wanting to the bright chaplet. Again they clustered around him, and the monarch seemed to have a heart for every flower of that bewitching garland.

The Boyarinia was somewhat dismayed when, instead of the proclamation of her child as Russia's empress, she was informed that the voluptuous sovereign again commanded the presence of them all.

"Yet it is so," muttered the aspiring matron to herself; "it is in the presence of them all he will announce his choice, and bid envy itself admit that Katinka has no rival."

But whilst her imagination fed her wishes with the triumph of her daughter, there was a

gathering rumour from the crowd in the palace court. It came to her ear laden with portentous meaning. She trembled at that swelling murmur of many voices; an undefined fear sank into her heart. The smile of triumph which had curled her haughty lip insensibly died away, and the half-opened mouth, straining eye, and beating heart, evinced the doubt and agitation of her ambitious soul.

In that hour of deep interest to thousands, two young forms had embraced in fond farewell—Marfa Sabakin and Grace Wilmington.

Sadness was in the breast of the English maiden, as she took a last survey of her new and lovely friend. She thought, with sorrow, that in a few short hours an empire would divide their love; for she anticipated, by her own admiration, that which a Czar would bestow, with a diadem, upon that queenly brow.

The Russian maiden smiled sweetly upon the English girl. “And wilt thou receive back the

rejected one beneath thy hospitable roof this night? 'Tis my fondest hope."

"Empress of Muscovy!" exclaimed Grace, in tears; "one last embrace! Ere night, thou wilt have none but subjects to love thee."

The arbas moved on with the gentle daughter of Vasili Sabakin, and in a few minutes they arrived at the boundary wall of the palace of the Czar.

A dense crowd was collected in the precincts of the Kremlin. Expectation and excitement were at their height. The election would decide the fate of thousands. The Russians remembered the influence which their holy Czarina, Nastasia, had possessed over their destiny, whilst the dread of a successor from the house of Basmanoff, long detested for its servile devotion to the despot, held them in painful suspense.

A flourish of trumpets now called the attention of the multitude. It proceeded from the

guard at the outer gates of the immense area before the palace. A waggon, covered with an awning of red cloth, had drawn up, and the travellers were alighting from it. Preceded by an escort of the Strelitz, a lady was seen advancing, whilst the guards drove back the populace in the name of the Great Lord Ivan Vassilivitch, Czar of all Russia.

She was supported by a middle-aged, portly man, plainly dressed, but displaying in the rich fur that lined his pelisse, opulence, if not rank.

The lady's dress was unassuming, although composed of expensive materials. She wore a veil, and would have passed without particular observation, had not a slight breeze wafted it for a moment from her face, when the crowd pressing forward to avail themselves of so unexpected and favourable an opportunity of beholding even one of the many candidates for the Czar's favour,

unconsciously fell back at the sight, doing homage to such transcendent beauty.

It was then that the murmur of the admiring million was heard in the halls of the Kremlin. No loud applause—no shout—but the suppression of them, as involuntarily the assembled subjects of Ivan ejaculated, “Behold, our virgin Czarina!”

The kolpaks of the men were raised from every head as she passed; and ere her gentle foot alighted on the threshold of the palace of Muscovy’s Czars, the name of Marfa Sabakin was distinctly borne, by the breath of admiration, to the ears of the inmates of the Kremlin.

To one in that royal abode was that name the harbinger of dismay. It was as the shaft of death in the moment of victory. Ambition, hope, hatred, and despair, were visible by turns in the countenance of Gregoriovna Basmanoff. Now followed the sound of footsteps

leading to the apartment of the Czar. They come. A vision of surpassing beauty has passed—a form of light and loveliness—condemned to her eternal hate.

The Czar was surrounded with fascinating forms, when an official announced the arrival of a beautiful girl whom report had preceded, but, from causes of delay already assigned, had not arrived for the general muster. It might have been supposed that the Czar would have spared the further embarrassment which a new rival might occasion. This was not, however, the case. It was a relief, perhaps, from his present indecision. Commanding her entrance, the newcomer appeared at the signal—as the Czar turned to observe her. With the indifference of an epicurean who has revelled in the banquet till appetite was no more, his gaze fell listlessly on the stranger. That gaze became suddenly fixed, and increased every moment in intensity.

The galaxy around him vanished from his sight. His hand, extended to wave back all obstruction, seemed to bid their charms retire before the maid who now entered the hall. Involuntarily he rose from his seat, and advanced half-way to meet the new competitor for his love.

His love! Long years had passed since that had descended to the tomb with his better genius—his Nastasia. With her were entombed all love of honour and justice; and the feeling that till now had survived was but a wretched mockery of passion.

On the threshold of the apartment, bending her forehead to the ground, the gentle being who now engrossed the attention of the Czar, timidly awaited encouragement to advance. As she slowly raised herself, her downcast look, her blush, the tremor that pervaded her frame, indicated more of dismay than triumph.

And if her hidden thoughts could have been searched by the throned monster, the secret pang of the fair victim would have been traced to abhorrence of him who now sought her love.

A sudden change came over the Czar. The flippant and frivolous tone with which he had met the now discarded ranks of beauty, the libertine mock-laugh, was gone. He saw Marfa Sabakin, and a rush of noble passion, like that which had once been called forth by the sainted Nastasia, burst the flinty covering of his heart, and Ivan the Destroyer loved once more.

Mastered by the honesty of his admiration, the sceptered murderer stepped forward to meet and encourage the timid maiden, who had no longer the power to advance. And Ivan involuntarily extended his hand to support his heart's elected bride.

The touch was an assassin's—it was that of

the exterminator—the butcher of Novogorod ;
and the child of nature, the artless Marfa
Sabakin, fainted at his feet.

upon the honour of her father's name, having flattered herself with the certainty of success up to the moment of the arrival of her dangerous competitor; for the Czar was beginning to show a preference which she was eager to believe would have been avowed, but for the inopportune arrival of Marfa Sabakin.

Her interview with her mother, when the decision of the Czar was made known, was strongly characteristic of the latter. By way of solace to the Lady Gregoriovna, she enlarged upon his majesty's penchant manifested in her favour, and bursting into tears, protested that the Czar's choice was as good as made when the merchant's upstart wench presented herself.

The Lady Basmanoff betrayed no sympathy in the grief of the discarded damsel. She paced the antechamber to and fro, ruminating solely upon the Czar's attentions to her daughter, and on the certainty that her's was the best chance,

should the Czar be early fated to become again a widower. And soliloquising in a subdued tone of voice, enough escaped her in her uncontrollable indignation, to enlighten the fair Katinka upon the resolutions of the lady of the bedchamber. She was encouraged by the Boyarinia to persevere in all those practised arts of the toilette, which could improve or enhance the charms of her person ; for the crown of the Czarina, she emphatically added, was *not* lost to the illustrious and ancient house of Basmanoff: nor would many days elapse, she confidently affirmed in the ear of her daughter, ere the bells which now rang the merry marriage peal, would be muffled for the widowed throne of the Czar.

The last words were spoken in that tone of encouragement and comfort, which is intended to convey a solace to the distressed. But the inexperienced maid involuntarily shuddered at the dark picture presented to her imagination, and ere she could fathom the depth of the lady's

meaning, the Boyarina was summoned, in her capacity of lady of the bedchamber, to wait upon the low-born child of a trafficker, now elevated to the throne of Muscovy's Czar.

It would have puzzled the most acute observer to have discovered the smouldering passions lurking beneath the mask of peace and complacency, which the countenance of the Boyarina assumed when she entered upon her duties to the elected bride.

There were traces of former beauty there, but a strong and unfeminine expression, acquired from the constant display of impetuous passions and unrestrained will. So little subject to control had she become, that to wish was to obtain, to command was to possess. Her masculine spirit, combined with the tact of woman, formed a being, whose quick perception, cunning, and strength of mind, contended successfully with the stronger sex. She had not found her master.

Superior to the weaknesses of woman-kind,

she was also an alien to those angelic qualities which win the affections of man. Her beauty alone had connected her with the softer sex. She married at an early age. Her lord and master was the interested choice of others, and the wedding-day was her first introduction to him. Her stripling spouse soon yielded obedience to her master mind, and pliant under her dexterous hand, became the tool of her ambition.

Their early marriage was productive of fruit. The Boyarina gave birth to twins. But her impatient spirit rebelled against the prostration of her strength and tardy convalescence. It will not, therefore, be matter of surprise, that she resolved upon no further addition to her family, anchoring her hopes upon this son and daughter.

Their birth took place when the noble Basmanoff was voyvode of Novogorod, and, according to custom, nurses were sought amongst

the healthiest of the neighbouring peasantry. Theodore, the heir to his ambitious parents, was well cared for; but with the girl, it fared otherwise.

That baneful disease, scourge and remnant of the Tartar yoke, the plica-polonica, first showed itself, about that period, in Russia, singling out, apparently, the youngest and the fairest. Amongst others, the twin-daughter of the Basmanoffs.

Wild with anxiety for the safety of her *own* child, the foster-mother hastened with the afflicted infant to the palace of the governor. The very menials shrunk from contact with the infected babe. It presented a horrid sight. The auburn locks, that but lately curled upon its tender brow, were matted and stiff with coagulated blood, whilst the livid paleness of the suffering little one betokened death.

The Boyarinia who had forsworn the nuptial couch, had done so upon the prospect of

rearing her infant twins. A wide field for ambition lay before her in after life, of which they were to be the instruments, when her husband, superannuated, had ceased to act even as her automaton. They would grow up as vigorous stems, to renew and perpetuate the honours and wealth of her noble house by suitable alliances.

It was therefore with less of affection than disappointment that she contemplated the afflicted object brought back to her to die.

Her quick and busy thought, superseding the tenderness of the mother, contemplated the destruction of her plans, rather than the dissolution of her child, and prompted her to dispatch immediately one of her menials for the woman's infant; and when it was brought into her presence, and she beheld the healthy countenance of the little stranger, she hesitated not to proclaim it her own. Vain were the cries of the frantic mother. To impose on all around, the

supposed delinquent was at once subjected to the convincing argument of the *battaogs*; nor did the flagellation cease till the bereaved parent was tortured to acknowledge the afflicted changeling as her own offspring. She was then suffered to depart, bearing with her the child of the Basmanoffs.

Whatever might have been the qualms of the Boyarinia, the extreme beauty of her adopted child procured for itself such attachment as a mother so entirely ambitious could feel. It grew up in grace and loveliness; it possessed, too, features that the Boyarinia loved. Every succeeding year her eyes acquired a greater brilliancy; her hair a darker hue; her shape, woman's loveliest mould; until the admiring Boyarinia almost forgot the story of the changeling, or confirmed her choice by a conscience habituated to fit itself to her purposes. Of the afflicted one she heard no more. At first some slight compunctions tempted her to make inquiry respect-

ing her fate, but a prudent calculation ever came in time to check the impulse, and at last the sufferer was forgotten.

On her elected one was lavished the care, the adornments, and the privileges of rank; and when, sparkling with gems and robed in splendour, Katinka was equipped to aspire to imperial nuptials, the Boyarinia, for once the dupe of her own machinations, gazed upon her with complacency and anticipated success, unconscious that in the balance of her ambition, the undue weight and importance which she attached to her expected kindred with the Czar, with the high hopes of consequent aggrandizement, had caused her judgment, in the opposite scale, to kick the beam.

Night and day she nursed her illusion, till by degrees desire became probability, and probability certainty.

Amongst the numerous personages and attendants summoned to form the household of

the Czar's new bride, was the physician Bome-lius. In the same hour that the Boyarinia had been made acquainted with the downfall of her air-built, but dearly-cherished, schemes, she was called upon to fulfil the duties of her appointment about the person of the rival of her own daughter. But the breeding of a court gives a wonderful control over the outward demeanour; and the solicitude of a mother seemed to blend with the performance of her duties, as she assisted in the chamber to which the Czarina elect had retired.

Oppressed with the excitement she had undergone in the presence of her sovereign, overwhelmed with the honour of her sudden elevation, Marfa Sabakin was borne to her chamber; and the maiden who had awaked that morning the unpretending child of an industrious tradesman, at night closed her eyes in the palace of her sovereign, the proclaimed partner of his throne.

The lady of the bedchamber sat in silent meditation at the foot of the bed, where lay the beautiful elect of her sovereign. The lamp, which had been shaded to facilitate the sleeper's repose, threw a gloom upon her; but when the assistants had retired, and left the Boyarinia the solitary watch of her future Czarina, she rose from her seat, turned the light full upon the face of the sleeper, and folding her arms, steadfastly fixed her gaze upon the maid.

It would have appeared, to one ignorant of the workings of the Boyarinia's mind, a calm survey of the heavenly beauty that amongst thousands had won the crown of empire, and now, ere one of its thorns had stung her virgin brow, slept in trust and peace, her soul occupied with its first dream of glory.

But the reflections of the Lady Gregoriovna concerned not then the happiness of the sleeper.

She thought of the wealth that would fall to

the share of the low-born maiden's parents. And now that the best and oldest families of the empire were daily sacrificed to a tyrant's suspicion, their confiscated wealth was an acquisition of overwhelming magnitude.

She thought of her rivals in power and influence, the hated partakers of the bounty of the Czar, and this gave her no less a pang; for in her fiery dream of success, she had consigned them to destruction, to fill with their spoil the coffers of her house.

All was at an end. From the proud altitude to which her busy brain had lifted her, she had been precipitated that day, by the mean-born damsel who was now her mistress.

She was immovable in that survey of her rival. Her spell-bound eyes, fixed upon her face, became at last restless. They seemed to dance in their sockets, from their minute search of those features. Their placid loveliness appeared strangely familiar to her imagination.

Her mind took a wild, yet vague, retrospect of the past, still returning to the one bitter thought, blighted ambition; and she inwardly cursed the unconscious destroyer of her hopes.

Exquisitely beautiful was the sleeper. A soft smile lingered upon her parted lips, which slightly revealed the pearls they would conceal. Locks of the richest auburn fell in unconfined luxuriance upon a shoulder of the purest white.

The Lady Gregoriovna did homage in her thought to such perfection; but it fanned her jealousy and wrath, and a deadly project crossed her brain, as she murmured accusingly, "Why hast thou stepped between me and fortune?"

"Remove the stumbling-block," whispered a voice in her ear.

The Boyarinia started. It was Bomeliùs, the Czar's physician.

The blood forsook her cheek, as she met the look of the physician. There was a wildness

in her manner, which evinced the disorder of her passions. The wily Bomelius proceeded—

“ I am deputed by our mighty sovereign to watch the safety and health of your charge. Poor thing! ’tis a pity one so fair and gentle should be the short-lived consort of a prince, who divorces the partner of his bed as easily as he shakes off his favourites and buffoons: it were mercy to spare her the trial.”

The Boyarinia looked for deeper expression in the doctor’s face, but its meaning was more disguised than wont; his eye returned the search into her own.

“ I have bethought me that our new Czarina,” and the words of the Jew were scarcely audible to her, though he spoke in her ear, “ will need some slight restorative in the night, to fit her for the arduous undertaking of the ceremony of the nuptials; and in my great solicitude for my master, here have I compounded a drug of such

effective powers, that henceforth all physic may be thrown aside, for once having passed the barrier of those rosy lips, she will not stand in need of more."

The hand of the Boyarinia concealed in its grasp the diminutive vial.

"'Twere best administered in her drink," whispered the physician.

The Boyarinia trembled from head to foot.

"She wakes!" observed the Lady Gregoriovna, recovering her composure. "Leave me; I am firm."

CHAPTER VII.

“ Il choisit en même temps pour épouse à son fils aîné, Eudoxie Sabouroff. Les pères de ces beautés heureuses furent élevés de simples roturiers, au rang de Boyards,” &c.—
KARAMSIN.

“ Changeant de femme à son gré ou selon les caprices de son père, comme lui il changeait aussi de concubines afin que la ressemblance fut plus complète entre eux.”—*IDEM*.

WE have seen the Czarevitch John following in the steps of the exterminator, emulating every excess, the right-hand of Ivan in every atrocity. It was the policy of this sceptred monster to make him the partaker of his deeds and his crimes, lest he should live to revile his parent's memory for an atrocity in which he had not been a participator.

The son of the Czar was a bondsman, his life and will were enslaved, and the prince and the serf worshipped God and Ivan in the same breath, and were alike only suffered to live during the despot's pleasure. Whatever germ of virtue the Czarevitch had inherited from his sainted mother, it had been long uprooted as a poisonous weed, in that nursery of vice, the court of Ivan Vassilivitch, and the rubicon of restraint had been passed for ever by the son of the Cæsar of the north.

The Czarevitch was a lasting link in memory's chain, between Ivan and his loved Nastasia. His features, his voice recalled her, but her saint-like virtues were entombed with her; this outward semblance, like a phantom, continually called back his grief, his bereavement, till he was roused to a fiendish hatred of the human race.

“This empire was made for Ivan!” but then upon his mind would steal the awful con-

viction of his own mortality. His vast power could not redeem Nastasia, nor render him immortal—then he would live for vengeance,—to exterminate such as Heaven had spared.

But for a moment the monster paused in his blood-stained career. Heaven, that Heaven he accused, smiled again, and like a Messenger of Mercy to suffering millions, the gentle Marfa Sabakin appeared. Vice and crime shrunk at the virtuous and lovely maiden's approach.

Though envy, for an instant, usurped the gentler feelings of the lovely candidates for the hand of Ivan, yet when Marfa Sabakin presented herself, came the soothing reflection that the merchant's beautiful daughter was no common rival, and they consoled themselves with the remaining chance of becoming the wives of the handsome officers of the Czar's household; and there were some who speculated upon the dashing officer of the Opritchnina, Theodore Basmanoff. Howbeit, they were doomed to

disappointment, for the young Boyar was now on a different pursuit, far away from the city.

In this dilemma, the Czar entered the apartment where they were congregated. Unmixed satisfaction beamed in his countenance.

“ Now will we have our choice proclaimed. Let the glad tidings spread o’er the face of Russia. Let every temple of our holy religion announce, with merry peal, we give a new Czarina to Muscovy.

“ What, my pretty ones !” said the Czar, turning to the discarded ladies. “ Nay, we will make atonement for this wilful slight of so much beauty.

“ My son !” continued the monarch, graciously leaning on his shoulder, “ thy wife, methinks, is religiously inclined,—humour her fancy at once,—let her go to Heaven her own way. And if thou heedest my advice, thou hast not far to seek another Heaven; only place

thymself in the leading-strings of one of these angelic creatures, and thou'lt not be far off."

If the Czarevitch had any qualms on the subject of repudiating his lawful wife, they were assuredly not confessed to his sire, for the despot's counsel was law, and the kerchief of the heir of Muscovy fell at the feet of Eudoxia Sabouroff.

"By the Virgin of three hands!" said Ivan, smiling, "but I have bargained for more than one successor, or I am no conjurer. Ha! Maluta, now, by my staff, thou dost cast thy shadow in my way to some tune. Well, we refuse none this auspicious day—so have *thy* choice!"

The low-born Maluta Skuratoff sprang forward. The words of the Czar yet rang in the Boyar Basmanoff's ear, as he beheld the *parvenu* lead from the lovely bevy, Katinka, the child of his ancient house. . . .

"Miscreant!" shouted the noble, as he

rushed, boiling with indignation, to intercept the favourite.

“ Now, sirrah ! may we know by what authority thou dost interfere,” said Ivan, as he suffered the spear-end of his iron staff to alight on the toes of Basmanoff; a fashion he had long found efficacious in settling the disputes of his courtiers.

To shrink, to shriek, were to die, and the old Boyar stifled the voice of suffering, to call down blessings on the head of his sovereign, the only bargain for his monarch’s mercy.

In as summary a fashion the remainder of the gentle candidates were disposed of, and though not all according to their inclinations, they seemed to bear their lot with more philosophy than their ambitious kinsfolk, and prudently took into consideration, that it was very condescending on the part of his majesty to allow them husbands at all, when, be it remembered,

that it was his general practice to make more widows than wives.

As for Maluta Skuratoff, his brightest hopes were crowned with success. The ancient and haughty race of the Basmanoffs were his kinsfolk. He had now grafted his name upon the hereditary stem of Russia's noblest race; and bold in the favour of the Czar, lest fortune should play him a prank by delay, he found a ready priest, and ere the sun went down, Katinka was irrevocably the wife of the ignoble adventurer, the favourite head-butcher of the Czar, and one of the legion of the Opritchnina.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Avec ces titres on leur donna pour richesses le butin *des exécutions*, biens considérables dont on avait dépouillé d’anciennes familles de princes et boyards.”—KARAMSIN.

WITH the dawn the monarch was stirring, and under the influence of passionate admiration for his chosen bride, he impatiently repaired to her chamber.

The maiden was already equipped and waiting his commands. The attiring women had lavished upon her person the gorgeous gems of the Czardom, and her dignified beauty added to the lustre of her jewelled garments: she looked her new grandeur, as if it had been her birthright. Nor when she bent to the ground, in acknowledgment of the presence of her

sovereign lord, did her innate elegance forsake her, and the love-humbled Czar raised her to his breast.

“ Doushenka !” *sweet one*, was the tender gratulation, as he looked into her eyes for love, yet startled at the palor of her cheek, which lacked the rose that languished in it but the preceding day, and graciously supporting her, Marfa Sabakin quitted her chamber, with the arm of her sovereign fondly entwined round her form.

As if to gratify every sense, to intoxicate with the splendour of royalty the chosen maid, the officers of the crown were assembled in their most sumptuous attire, and lined the vast extent of the Krasnoi Kritzo entrance to the Czar’s private wing of the palace. The day itself poured in its richest rays of light, chequering the golden tapestry of the halls, and the gilded roof reflected the sunny beams. The senators and counsellors, the favourites and buffoons, the satellites and soldiery, all the

faithful mirrors of the mood of sovereignty, caught up the joyful and radiant smile of the happy Czar, and its semblance was visible on the faces of that vast assembly.

On moved the enamoured Ivan with the trembling maid. Hall after hall was passed, where, heaped in profusion, the gold and silver relics of the Czardom attested the wealth of Muscovy's throned lord. A faint smile passed over the virgin's pale cheek.

The treasures she beheld could not purchase her heart, and her thoughts were then with the warrior of the Wolga.

“Look, love, sweet partner of the wealth of my diadem!” said the Czar, with an exulting glance, as they entered the chamber of jewels.

It was, indeed, a dazzling display. Pyramids of jewelled vases, the spoil of the massacred; mitres of the murdered high-priests of his people, where the tempting gems had excited his cupidity; the consecrated cups of altars,

and the golden gates of the sacred ikonostas, wrenched from the holy shrines, were piled in ostentatious profusion.

“Bring forth my staff-royal,” said the Czar, and the striaptchi, the lord of the chamber, produced it.

“Behold! sweet one,” as he turned to his trembling bride, with all his love of riches now animating his countenance; “behold! it cost me seventy thousand marcs; I bought it of the Augsburgh merchant. See what a fire of life is in this diamond, yet do they say the powder of it doth take life away. Mark thou this precious ruby; your magicians affirm it comforts the brain, awakens the memory, and clarifies congealed blood. Ha! jewel of all jewels. See! the sapphire. Now do I affect this gem more than the dazzling diamond. Bomelius! if thy witchcraft lies not,” he continued, as the wily physician crouched before him, “the sapphire hath more virtue than them all.”

“It hath, great prince!” quickly responded the Jew, who, in fact, was only praising the merchandise he had sold the Czar.

“Thou sayest it preserveth strength, courage, and rejoiceth the heart; is sovereign to the sight, and invigorates the muscles; nay, has a power over our vital senses.”

“All these virtues it doth possess, great Czar,” submissively replied Bomelius.

“Now will we wear it next our heart.

“Ah! Here have we a noble relic of an ignoble churchman!” exclaimed Ivan, as he extended his hand and brought full in view a magnificent cup of gold with a large ruby in its centre. “Observe it, my fair flower! ’tis our loving gift, and let it henceforth be thy festal cup when thou dost drink our health.”

Marfa tremblingly held forth her hands to receive the costly present. At a glance she saw—she knew, the sacred vessel whence her virgin lips had partaken of the Eucharist at the

altar of the cathedral of her native city ; it was part of the plunder of Novogorod.

“ Your majesty, the lady faints !” exclaimed the Dutch physician. “ The open air may be of benefit.”

The monarch, as he marked the truth of these words, anxiously supported his bride, and with the assistance of Bomelius, they ascended the Krasnoi Krittzo steps, which immediately abutted on a castellated platform.

Whilst Marfa Sabakin was sinking under the honours of royalty, the citizens were busy with rumours of the qualities of the new Czarina. They were favourable ; and there were those who prophesied, from her reign would be dated the salvation of Russia. If the church opposed the bans of a new marriage, the saints were nevertheless invoked to bless the people with a merciful empress, and prayers were offered for her happiness. The metropolitan, alike the rigid censor of Czar and serf, withheld not his

invocation for Heaven's mercy upon this new victim to imperial nuptials, and over his congregation came the solacing hope of Russia's regeneration.

But sorrow was in the breast of the church dignitary. There were treasured the confidences of sinners and sufferers; and if the Czar was served in fear, he could not seal the lips of love, and there was not a scheme set on foot to ruin the patriarch of which he was not immediately apprised by the devotion of the Muscovites. He had been informed that his days were numbered; but this intimation brought no dread to the man of God, whose eighty years of piety had prepared him for a higher tribunal than the worldly one he was to appear before. At length the wretch was found whose price for calumny was gold; and he sorrowed for that guilty soul.

He had retired to private prayer; to that scrutiny of the inmost thought of which he was

so soon to render an account, when his solitude was intruded upon ; and though the Muscovite who entered was not one of the privileged nobility of the land, his passport was Christianity, and the prelate recalled his attention to frail humanity.

“ Father of the church, thy blessing ! A sinner seeks thy counsel.”

“ Speak, my son ! Thou seest my locks are white ; the snow of wintry age is on my beard, and time is precious for my soul.”

“ Thank Heaven ! thou livest yet to serve my need. My story is soon told. I am the reputed father of a beloved child. The wealth of traffic made a home for her, which she enriched with every virtue that the heart of spotless innocence enshrines.”

“ Speak on, my son ! I love to hear of such perfection in the human breast.”

“ ’Tis sixteen summers ago ; my wife yet sighed o’er her barrenness, and sought to pro-

pitiate the holy saints with every charity ; when one day, on such errand bent, an infant, deserted by its natural parents, was brought to her, suffering and disfigured by disease. She nursed it night and day, and it so pleased Heaven, the little one recovered. We removed to Nijni ; the child grew up, reputed mine, and we did love it so, we could not disown the little one for her own sweet sake, for she believed she was our only daughter.”

“ I hear thee, my son. Speak on of that fair child.”

“ And fair wouldst thou say she was, if thou didst see her, holy father.”

“ I see her, son, in thy delineation of all her goodness. Fair would she be in the eye of her heavenly Father, though crooked in form ; and ’tis the soul’s beauty I would ever look upon.”

“ She grew in comeliness, ’twas like a heavenly garment to her soul, so matchless was her person. And modesty kept pace with woman-

hood; gentle and retiring, the little world of my domestic home was large enough for all her joys, and she was the storekeeper of our own."

"My son, thou dost refresh my drooping heart with thy honest tale. Would there were many homes like thine in this distracted country. But thou hast more to say." And the venerable man wiped a glistening tear from his eye.

"Yet was she seen when attending our holy ceremonies of the church, and the neighbours would speak of her beauty. I have little more to say. The heralds of the Czar came to Nijni, they heard of our treasure, and she was summoned to the palace; her adopted name is Marfa Sabakin."

The venerable frame of the prelate shook violently, his aged limbs faltered; he sank on his knees, and in a tremulous voice exclaimed—"The Czarina of Russia!" as he fervently offered up a thanksgiving.

Vassili Sabakin, for it was the traveller from Nijni, assisted the prelate to rise.

“ Now, father, would I have thy counsel,” said Sabakin; “ with that fair jewel in my home, I envied not the wealth of the Kremlin; yet now I am poor, indeed; for who shall restore—replace my beloved Marfa. But time presses, holy father; the dignitaries of the crown, the officers of the Czar, are in search of me, to place at my disposal the wealth of the reputed parent of Russia’s empress.

“ On my knees, I implore thee, venerable pastor, to acquaint the sovereign that I am no kin to Russia’s Czar; and let thy accents’ pour with holy balm into the ear of that pure one, the secret which had never been revealed to her but for this destined royalty. The forfeit of her reputed father is repaid with a throne.

“ O let thy sainted life plead for the monarch’s pardon of this deception; and if a

solace to my breast remains in yielding up this secret to my more than daughter—it is that the hateful treasures which belong to the Czarina's father, will never contaminate the honest earnings of Vassili Sabakin.”

CHAPTER IX.

“ If the midnight bell
Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,
Sound one unto the drowsy race of night :
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs ;
“ Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words ;
Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts ;
But, ah ! I will not.”

WHEN the lovely charge of the Boyarinia Basmanoff had on the eventful day undergone the superintendence of the tiring-women, she had been much importuned to suffer her cheeks to

submit to a process, which was that lady's standard of feminine beauty, and Marfa Sabakin resigned herself to the Boyarinia's taste in these matters. For be it known, much as the young lady's charms have been praised, her appearance that morning was alarmingly pale; and the adjunct of carmine to her white cheek, certainly was not in this instance injudiciously applied. For an evident appearance of languor hung over the bride, but she rallied as the visit of her imperial master was announced; and as we have described, with the solitary instance of her fainting fit in the chamber of jewels, her demeanour was altogether majestic.

The Boyarinia herself was extremely subdued; her manner was changed, it had lost that haughty and imperious air of command. She seemed at length to have bent to the yoke: the free agency of her past life was gone. Her step was not so firm; she moved as if she were now accountable for her actions, and her words were

as measured as if she were accountable for her thoughts. The slightest noise fretted her ear. At the opening of a door she changed colour—trembled at the approach of footsteps.

The Lady Basmanoff had retired to her private apartment in the palace during the absence of her young mistress, and sat buried in profound thought. In her hand she held a cup of cordial, which ever and anon she raised to her lips; but the cup and its contents fell from her tremulous grasp, as the door of the apartment was rudely thrown open, and her son stood before her.

He looked furious. His lips were white with rage; and, as he gazed on his mother, each glance was replete with reproach and indignation.

Time was, when a look from that proud lady would have quelled this storm; but it was now her turn to quail, and she dared not ask what she dreaded to hear.

“Mother, thou hast brought this stigma upon our race. Hadst thou not thrust thy daughter forward, but been content with a noble alliance with Boyars, I should not now have to blush for the name of Basmanoff.”

“Thou dost forget thyself, Theodore. Are these the thanks of my children? I would have them aspire to royalty: ambition is no stigma.”

“But when they form alliances with the scum of adventurers, they disgrace their noble house.”

“Explain thyself!” interrupted the Lady Gregoriovna.

Theodore Basmanoff looked at his mother incredulously.

“Dost pretend not to know that thy daughter, my sister, is the wife of Maluta Skuratoff?”

Gregoriovna Basmanoff, whose firmness had at first forsaken her, was herself again. She stood up, her eye so firmly fixed on her son,

that the young nobleman almost [shrank from its steadfast gaze.

“ I hope thou liest,” said the Boyarinia, in a hollow voice.

“ Hadst thou never borne her, mother, the name of Basmanoff would have been saved from this foul stain.”

The Boyarinia stared vacantly around. Her unsettled gaze wandered over every object. She paced the room; and, though silent, her lips moved quickly, as if giving vent to the workings of her mind. Anon, she smiled a maniac smile, which made the beholder shudder.

Theodore Basmanoff heeded her not, till roused, as [from a dream, words of crime—of regicide, fell from his mother’s lips.

“ So! Ivasko, the child of Gregoriovna Basmanoff wife of the bastard Maluta Skuratoff—Ha! ha! ha! Thy beggarly minion grafted on *my* house, to ennoble *him*. Thou wast not wise,

Ivasko, to slight my Katinka—for she would have lived to nurse thy old age. Ring, ring, a merry peal—a wife, for Ivasko, the widower !”

“ Art thou mad, mother? Has he not for wife the loveliest maid of Muscovy? When on a mission for the Czar, far from the city, did I hear of it. ’Tis Marfa Sabakin,” sighed Theodore.

At the name of the bride, the Boyarina turned round like a maddened tigress.

“ He loves her—the pretty bauble—the fool! Rough boys should have stubborn toys to play with. This puppet will not last him long.”

“ What meanest thou, mother? Is she ill?”

“ Very !”

“ Thou hast the control of her household, and thou lookest not to her health ; procure the leech. O, she is guiltless of our wrongs ; such beauty must be all innocence. Thou wouldst not visit her with thy revenge ?”

“No longer, son!” said the Boyarinia, with a ghastly grin.

The parties were interrupted by a servant of the lady’s household, who submissively crouching as he entered, prostrated himself before his mistress, waiting for permission to speak.

If the serving herd of menials were in the estimation of the Boyarinia an inferior class of humanity—things of whom she felt ever independent, and in her utmost privacy, would suffer without a blush the offices about her person to be performed by either sex, so they were slaves—yet, in the awful visitation which her pride had undergone, humbled, and dismayed, she feared even the curiosity of a bondsman, nor suffered it to be awakened to a knowledge of her degradation.

It was an intelligent countenance that of Youry, the menial who waited on the Boyarinia. He was no slave, but of a class who must pur-

chase bondage for a livelihood ; youthful looking, though no longer young, which was perhaps owing to a total absence of beard. This was not very remarkable in a country where the Tartars abounded, beardless as women. He had been for years in the service of the Boyarina, and more particularly in attendance on her daughter. Meek, intelligent, and active, he had become a favourite domestic, and the young Boyarishnia had grown up with increasing attachment to her faithful attendant.

“ What wouldst thou ? ” placidly said the Boyarina, as she perceived him restlessly endeavouring to court her attention.

“ Gracious mistress ! ” tremblingly replied the menial, as he bowed his head, till the locks of his hair swept the ground ; “ I have served thee for many years.”

The colour rushed to the Boyarina’s face ; but one engrossing subject of thought possessed

her mind—the degradation of her family she for a moment surmised—that a hireling sought to shun her service.

“Proceed; what wouldst, my good Youry?” courteously interrogated his mistress.

“Permission to quit the service of the Boyarinia.”

This was, perhaps, a pang more humiliating than all, as the words seemed to confirm her suspicion. The mask of placidity fell from her face.

“And leave to enter the service of the bride, your noble daughter,” continued the servant.

“The bride—the bride!” drawled slowly forth the Boyarinia, the sudden thought electrifying her frame, whilst her features were distorted with an hysteric burst of laughter.

“The bride! Ha! ha! ha!” and another convulsive fit of laughter astounded the serving-man, who, apparently in dismay, waited its conclusion.

The Boyarina was in a frenzied state of excitement, whether from joy or sorrow it were now difficult to surmise. She paced the apartment with a hasty step; her stature seemed to have increased in height, and her head was raised contemptuously. Anon, she looked a Pythoness; her nostrils distended, her lips compressed, her eye starting, and her very step seeming to plant itself into the floor; and now every feature relaxed, her eyes sparkling with exultation, and her footsteps falling with fairy lightness.

“The bride! the bride!” she exclaimed, when comparative calmness was restored to her manner. “Bear witness, husband!” darting towards him as he now appeared at the door. But another convulsive fit of laughter burst forth, and for some minutes she was unable to say more.

A sullen silence was maintained by the Boyar and his son; stung, humbled, galled

to the quick, they turned in disgust from the ill-timed merriment of the Boyarinia. Their seriousness, however, assisted to recall her to reason.

“ Bear witness, Basmanoff; thou hast often said, that when the infant we did think our own was brought from nurse, it was a changeling. Now, mark! Though I have reared this foundling from the breast, bestowed a mother’s care, and loved it as my own, yet hast thou oft observed its features bore no semblance unto thine, or mine, nor unto Theodore; the girl has eyes of darker hue than ours; her hair is black—coal black—which is neither like to yours, nor Theodore’s, nor mine.”

“ Truth sayest thou, wife; the girl I ever deemed was not our own.”

“ Away! to the market-place, away!” shrieked the exulting Boyarinia. “ To horse, and scour the city! Spread it from the Gostini-dvor to

the Palace, from Spas-na-Boru to the Sparrow Hills; let Moscow—let all Russia know, the bride of the ill-begotten Maluta Skuratoff is no kin to the noble and ancient house of Basmanoff. Away! I'll watch you from the casement—a drop of my life-blood oozes every minute of delay; for I would blot out from my memory the accursed hour that made me kinswoman of the ignoble Maluta Skuratoff!"

"Now, by St. Serge! 'tis brave news," exclaimed her hopeful son, as he sprang to the door. "'Tis but an hour ago, the miscreant, as he passed me, shouted 'Brother!'"

"The braggart!" rejoined the Boyarinia. "And what didst thou?"

"I spat upon the ground, and clutched my dagger."

"Did any note thee?"

"Some of the citizens, whereupon he turned away."

“ And they—the citizens—what said they?”

“ They smiled, but not till he had turned his back upon them.”

“ The slaves! But haste! why loiter? the sun will set ere thou hast done my bidding, away! Basmanoff, take in the circuit the Zemlianoigorod, and stop their filthy mouths, ere in one breath they name us with the beast Maluta.” Then urging him to speed, she enforced her wishes by pushing him out of the door.”

The Boyarinia was herself again, when she addressed Youry.

“ Thou didst ask me something?”

“ Permission to enter the service of the bride.”

The lady turned a scrutinising glance upon the fellow, as if to fathom his meaning.

“ My good Youry, thou mayest leave my service; but the bride, if thou dost mean Maluta Skuratoff’s, I have nought to do with, for no kin or acquaintance exists between us.”

“ Thanks, gracious Boyarinia,” said the good Youry, kissing the border of the noble lady’s garment, and with many bendings, sweeping at each the floor with his hair, he made his exit from the house of the Boyarinia, and took the direction to that of the notorious Maluta Skuratoff.

CHAPTER X.

“ La piazza detta di pidocchi, dove tutto il giorno si vedono Moscoviti a farsi la barba, e vi è tanta copia di capelli, che si passa come sopra matarazzi.”—VIAGGI DI MOSCOVIA, VITERBO, 1688.

“ Il fit acte de soumission ainsi que le prince Etichaï, qui gouvernait la ville de Tébend. Celui-ci, en apportant le tribut à Iermak, lui présenta sa jeune fille fiancée au fils de Koutchoum ; mais l’hetman rigide observateur des lois de la chasteté, ordonna à la vierge des déserts d’éloigner de lui *la séduction de ses attraits et de son innocence.*”—KARAMSIN.

THE vast city lay before the gaze of the monarch and his bride, from the parapet to which they had ascended by the beautiful Krasnoi stairs. Often from this elevated platform the Czar would survey the vast panorama of the city ;

it was here he witnessed the advance cloud of dust when the Tartar came to plunder and destroy; from hence he beheld the destruction of the city—heard “the roaring of the storm, and the crackling of the fire.”

But the Kremlin remained. Its buildings, its ramparts of stone, withstood the scorching element without; whilst the new suburbs, of magic growth, again lay in vast extent before him.

With much satisfaction he surveyed the rapid rise of the city. The house-market itself formed no inconsiderable portion; to this place were brought from all quarters of Russia wooden houses ready made, easily taken to pieces, and reconstructed wherever the purchaser chose to fix his abode. Whole streets, at right angles, were now formed in the suburbs around the “red wall” of the Kitaigorod, where every profession and trade was allotted its proper quarter. One street was devoted to the venders of pictures

of saints; another to sempstresses; others to shoemakers and tailors; nay, to such an extent was the systematic appropriation carried, that the hair-dressers were all confined to one vicinity; by which ordination this market-place came to be so covered with the superfluous hair of the Muscovites, that it was like walking upon mattresses, or feather-beds; whilst a characteristic epithet, unnecessary to be here inserted, was bestowed upon this *barbarous* vicinage.

The Kitaigorod was again encircled by the Czargorod, or the "Citie Royal," noted for the butchers' shambles, tippling-houses, and the royal stables. And this already great city was surrounded by the Skoradom quarter, which, before the invasion of the Tartars, "was five German leagues about." It embraced the Strelitz quarter; and was appropriated to the foreign artisans, and the dregs of the people. It acquired, in after-times, the nick name of the City of Drunkards; for the Muscovites having

been restrained from tippling by an imperial ukase, the strangers' quarter, which was not included in the proscription, became the refuge of toppers, and acquired from foreigners this impartial distinction.

But the disagreeable minutiae of the filthy suburbs was not perceptible from the high platform of the palace whence the monarch now surveyed "wide-spreading Moscow." The bird's-eye view of the Crimlenagorod had nothing in it to revolt the Czar. The high tower of Ivan Veliky, with its gilded cupola, was an object of deserved admiration, erected in his reign. The church of "our Saviour behind the golden rail," with its green roof and red turrets, crowned with gilt domes, and surmounted by crosses of gold raised over the crescent, from which depended innumerable gilt chains, produced a lively and gorgeous effect.

The lofty church of the Annunciation, and the temple of the Virgin of Petchersk, were then

in their primitive beauty; whilst the temple dedicated to the martyr Uar, animated the scene with its variegated roof of many-coloured tiles, surmounted by the golden cross.

As he gazed around, and surveyed the lofty towers of Archers, whence secret passages under ground communicated with the palace; the magnificent churches, and their innumerable glittering domes, all surmounted with the double cross of gold upon the prostrate crescent, their graceful chains linking them to the parapets of the temples, and appearing like the clustered masts of a golden fleet, the monarch exulted in his might: the flow of the Moskva, the waters of the Yaousa, the current of the Negliana, then unencumbered, bathing with their silver streams the gilded edifice, imparted additional beauty to the scene.

Such was the magnificence displayed before him, who was lord of all he surveyed. But to one object, surpassing all in beauty, his

eye incessantly returned, he gazed upon it in rapture—it was the church dedicated to the blessed Trinity; and Ivan, as he directed the attention of his bride to its elegant symmetry, remembered with satisfaction that the gifted subject who had erected that immortal structure, could plan no more to rival its beauty, for, thanks to his precautions, the sight of the architect was gone for ever.

The Belvedere, where the monarch now reclined beside his lovely bride, was furnished with eastern magnificence; a costly canopy, or awning, shielded them from the summer ray; whilst the exhilarating breeze, in their elevated position, seemed to raise the drooping health and spirits of the lovely girl. Perhaps the grandeur of that imposing scene imparted, for the first time, a sense of the magnitude of her new estate and power: then came the noble aspirations of a young and virtuous heart, that these great gifts might be by her turned to

good account, and the apparent empire which she seemed to have acquired over the lord of these vast dominions, might yet be exerted to recall him to a sense of justice and humanity.

The countenance of the virtuous and good is at all times an acceptable balm, even to the most depraved. Associated with the pure-minded Marfa, he might cease to be the scourge of mankind; and the young and trembling creature whose happiness was wrecked upon a throne, might yet live to see her scattered hopes and joys restored in the blessings of her fellow-creatures.

From this bright dream of her country's good her thoughts strayed to the hero of the Wolga—a ray of patriotism animated her beautiful face; and now, as the Czar had summoned the musicians to charm his gentle bride, she took from their hands the balalaika, and waving to the minstrels to begone, her fingers ran over a few preluding chords, and a voice of such

exquisite melody as had never before greeted the ears of the enraptured monarch, now burst into song.

THE CONQUEST OF SIBERIA.

I.

“Who comes from the deserts of the Kuma? Who pours his might from the heights of Oural on the vales of Sibir? Yermak, the hero of Spears.”

II.

“The swords of the invaders have carved a banquet for the vultures of the Irtisch. The ravens rejoice on the banks of the Tura. The warriors of the Siberian Koutchoum have bled.”

III.

“The warlike race of the conqueror-chief flourish on the banks of the Wolga’s majestic stream. Fearful is the battle-stride of the Donskoï-Ataman over the land of the golden mines. Where he hath passed in strife, the grass shall cease to grow.”

IV.

“Mighty is the Czar of the Sons of Battle.
The light of day wanes o'er his vast domain.
The glorious orb sinks to rest on his western
power. But his wrath is heavy on the race of
heroes ; their doom is death.”

V.

“Let the ransom of life be the crown of Sibir
—the virgin ore of the Oural. Let the golden
mines of the Altayan rocks redeem the crime.”

VI.

“The Donskoï Cossacque rushes to battle.
The armies of Koutchoum are spread in flight,
like the fragments of a mighty wreck on the
angry ocean wave.”

VII.

“The princes of the conquered land do ho-
mage. Etichai, the chief of Tebend, has led
his blooming child to the invaders' tents.
Yermak the brave beholds the lovely maid.”

VIII.

“The child of Etichai is betrothed to the heir of Koutchoum: but the hero of battle has seized that prostrate chief’s domain. Etichai bows to the rising fortunes of the stranger.”

IX.

“The virgin from Tebend’s waste is fair as the snow-drop on the lap of earth; pure as the spotless ermine in the steppe of Abakin.”

X.

“Graceful is the maid as the fawn-footed antelope on the banks of the Onon: chaste as the unsunned icicle on the mountain peak of Osmowa.”

XI.

“Thine is the child of Etichai: conqueror of the land of the golden mines. Thine is the throne of Sibir. The Prince of Tebend is thy vassal, O King! And the foe of thy race shall be mine.”

XII.

“ Hence with the virgin of the desert, nor tempt my vow: my heart mourns the wrath of the *White-Czar*. War on his foe is the love of my breast.”

XIII.

“ Darkly frowned the Prince Etichai. The storm of his wrath echoed through the pine forests of vast Sibir. It kindled the fires of battle.”

XIV.

“ The Tungusch archers sharpen their darts of steel: they bend the treacherous bow. The tattooed Ostiaks menace with their hundred tribes: the hostile multitudes advance.”

XV.

“ The blood of the sons of Sibir rains from the mighty sword of Yermak. Spears cross like a web of iron. The bent bow twangs; the fatal shaft is sped.”

XVI.

“Great is the carnage on the banks of the Irtisch. Headlong, sinks in the wave the death-stricken foe. The crimsoned waters roll with the pallid corpse. The iron crown of Sibir is won.”

“Now, by my faith, sweet songstress! thy verse smacks of conquest with a vengeance! Why, thou art a very maker of kings!” said Ivan, with an indulgent smile. “But of a truth, I will do thee the justice to say, that thy conquest has one merit.”

“What means my great lord?” timidly inquired the lovely girl.

“That the outfit for it has not impoverished my exchequer. But, prithee, my charming magician, since thou hast made a hero of a notorious freebooter, why didst thou not complete the character; and as he acquired the

sceptre in our name, confirm *him* in the possession of it instead of ourselves. Now, I remember me, this said bandit made free with the contents of an ammunition waggon. Thou wouldst say the powder was taken on account to conquer the kingdom of Siberia!—Ha! ha! ha!—Nay, look 'not so grave, my sweet empress, thou shouldst be merry with the victory; for art thou not the partner of our glory?

“ Talking of these marauders, now I bethink myself,” continued the Czar, “ that same bandit, Koltzo, who was concerned in the pillage of the ammunition of my royal guard, has shown himself again within our dominions; nay, 'twas he who waylaid thee on thy road to Moscow, and defeated the troops of my brave Opritchnina, who volunteered to bring thee in safety. How comes it thou dost speak in behalf of these outlaws?”

“ *Gossudar*, my great lord!” exclaimed his

young bride as she sank at his feet, "Koltzo the Cossaque was my defender—my preserver!"

This explanation was lost in a volume of sound which at that moment thundered over the city. The monarch turned pale as he looked round and beheld a vast concourse of people rushing in the direction of the Kremlin, and a body of horsemen, armed with long spears, and parading strange banners, approaching the gates. His agitated breast ever anticipating revolution, his first thought was that a sudden rebellion had broken out, and that the mighty bells of Ivan Veliki, and of the thousand steeples of the city, which pealed forth, were the tocsin of civil war.

Hurried steps approached by the red-stairs—the Czar clutched his poniard; for at that moment the distant firing from the rampart of the Kitaigorod, the sound of trumpets wafted to his ear by the gale, and the vast crowd of citi-

zens pouring in at the gates of the boundary wall of the Kremlin, subdued him with fear;— he trembled.

Maluta Skuratoff appeared, and prostrated himself at the feet of the monarch.

“Haste with thy message — the rebels — speak!”

“The ambassador from Timoeef Yermak, Donskoï Cossacque, and now Viceroy of Siberia, advances. His herald claims audience of the Oto-Czar of Muscovy.”

“And who may the rebel Yermak’s ambassador be? Another such, I ween, as this Koltzo.”

“My liege has said,” replied the favourite.

“Methinks, sweet maid, that thou dost deal in magic. Or is it some phantasma of the brain, conjured by the poesy of thy song?”

“Believe your slave, great Czar,” said, in a trembling voice, the maiden; “it is even as he says, the ambassador of Yermak—Koltzo,

the Cossacque of the Wolga, bears to thee the crown of Sibir, and the allegiance of the princes of the kingdom Koutchoum.”

The Czar glanced suspiciously from his minion to his bride; the incredible event had come upon him so suddenly, that, though it brought to him a glory exceeding all that the annals of the past recorded, he could not yet bring himself to believe, that a few daring and adventurous outlaws had added a vast empire to his dominions.

But now fast gathered the courtiers, the senators, the princes of the land; they surrounded him; they proclaimed him Czar of Sibir and Tobol: and Ivan, as he still gazed upon the features of his bride, and beheld their animation, the fixed yet beaming eye, “where truth did seem to set its seal,” clasped with rapture the maiden to his breast as he said—

“Sweet messenger from Heaven! of love

and glory, partake with us the honour which invests our Czardom with a triple crown, and adds another triumph to the reign of Ivan Vasilivitch." Then bidding the officers lead the way to the throne, he followed with his bride.

CHAPTER XI.

“Indépendamment des avantages que Randolph obtint pour les commerçans de son pays, Jean, sur ses instances mit en liberté Fitzgerbert, qu’on accusait d’avoir composé quelques lettres outrageantes pour le tzar ; it fit aussi, grace à Thomas Green, convaincu d’intelligences secrètes avec l’ambassadeur, et à André Asherton, qu’on accusait d’avoir envoyé à Londres des lettres de marchand Anglais.”—KARAMSIN.

MASTER George Tuberville was busily engaged, seated at a table, well supplied with pens, ink, and paper, committing to record the dictations of Sir Thomas Randolph, who, in deep thought, paced the narrow apartment, occasionally stopping to deliver the burthen of his reflections.

“Brief of the privileges and immunities,” spoke Sir Thomas, “to be required of the Grand

Duke Ivan Vassilivitch, Czar of Russia, in behalf of sundry subjects of her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth of England.”

“England,” drawled Master Tuberville.

“Whereas,” continued Sir Thomas, “in virtue of an alliance offensive and defensive, her said majesty doth stipulate, that it shall be lawful for her subjects to have free passage through the Czar’s dominions into the court of Persia: that they shall be permitted to go in quest of, and to open, the iron mines in his majesty’s dominions, upon condition that they initiate the Grand Duke’s subjects in such operations; and that the duty upon said iron shall not exceed one denega per pound for exportation.”

“Tation,” continued the secretary.

“That British subjects shall have every facility for trading, without impost: that they shall be free to erect store-rooms and warehouses, and to coin a currency for their own use.”

“That the Grand Duke shall be entreated to

grant a pardon to such Englishmen as may be now incarcerated for holding private communication with their ambassador.

“ And the like unto another accused of having transmitted to London the correspondence of sundry British merchants.”

“ An’ it please you, Sir Thomas,” interrupted the secretary, “ a word in behalf of the unwarrantable incarceration we ourselves now endure.”

“ Again,” continued Sir Thomas, and Master George was armed with his pen.

“ Mem. To solicit the Grand Duke to permit Walter Wilmington, his physician, and a subject of Great Britain, to return to his own country.”

“ I’faith, Sir Thomas, in no wise do I wish you success in any of your negotiations more than in this.”

“ And wherefore, Master Secretary ?”

“ Inasmuch, as with your wonted gallantry,

you will give them the advantage of our escort ; and, truth to say, Sir Thomas, the doctor's sweet daughter will afford us most delicious company."

" By my troth, Tuberville, I do suspect thou art in love."

" An' it were so, Sir Thomas, I could not blush thereat. So comely and so sweet a maid it is not oft my lot to encounter. And yet, methinks, the odds would be against me, seeing the damsel hath afforded me no particular countenance."

" Art sure she hath not ?" asked Sir Thomas, narrowly observing his secretary.

" Nay, else had I not lost the 'vantage ground. Yet, sooth, she is a most delicious creature ; and though I may not taste the honey of her lip, I would ever bask me in the sunshine of her presence."

" What if I questioned her in thy behalf, good sir ?"

“Beseech you not, Sir Thomas. Though much I reverence your capabilities as an ambassador, there are some missions, the which I would not trust to any representative. Indeed, Sir Thomas, within my short experience, I have known that on love’s embassies the sovereign is forgotten, and the subject plays the principal.”

Sir Thomas smiled.

“The lady,” continued Master Tuberville, “is ever most affable and obliging, yet hath she for me no marked deference. Were I to speak my mind, Sir Thomas, methinks I have seen some shadow of preference for yourself.”

“Then hath it escaped my notice; and it has been occasioned, perchance, by the consciousness of thy deserts and gallantry,” rejoined Sir Thomas, his countenance brightening.

“It might be mere fancy, Sir Thomas.”

“Fancy, I do assure thee,” added the ambassador, looking more grave.

“ Yet in truth she is a noble creature.”

“ A noble creature is she?” rejoined Sir Thomas, and he appeared buried in thought.

“ Had I the pen of Sir Philip Sydney, methinks I could outstrip all he hath said of beauty, yet not add to the portrait. And she hath wit withal.”

“ Wit withal,” echoed Sir Thomas.

“ And hath she not a very winning grace; a smile where Cupid holds high revel? A form, Pygmalion would have died to clasp, and died in the embrace. A charming person is she?”

“ Charming,” replied the ambassador.

“ Then, hath she much learning. Petrarch and Dante doth she quote; and in good earnest doth she read your Shakspeare’s wit, with such becoming taste, that it hath come upon me like a new and daintier fare of intellect. On my life, Sir Thomas, the lass will prove a prize to him that wins her.”

Sir Thomas appeared in thought, his face

buried in his hand, the while Master Tuberville gave utterance to his rhapsody.

“ Indeed, Sir Thomas, I pray you strive to gain the barbarian’s consent to release our friend Wilmington from thralldom. We are beholden unto him much, for he hath shown us much courtesy, and afforded us great comfort in our exile.”

“ I will do my endeavour, good Master Tuberville.”

But further colloquy was interrupted by the arrival of two Russian dignitaries, who acquainted Sir Thomas that it was the pleasure of the Czar that the British ambassador should present himself at court forthwith, to witness his majesty’s inauguration as Czar of Siberia.

Much did Sir Thomas marvel, when the presence of the Czar’s messengers was followed by the arrival of Master Walter Wilmington in great trepidation of spirit, for his majesty had commanded the physician’s immediate attend-

ance at the palace, accompanied by his fair daughter.

If the father was alarmed at the danger of his beautiful child's appearance at court, not less so was Sir Thomas. The circumstance of Grace Wilmington's acquaintance with the elected bride, was the supposed cause of the invitation: nor did they err in this conjecture. The lively remembrance of the Englishman's hospitality, her generous admiration of his daughter, had prompted the Czarina to name her obligations to her sovereign; and the lion, now in the leading-strings of love, denied nothing to the fair guardian of his happiness.

“Fully do I appreciate, my worthy friend,” said Sir Thomas, “the peril of sweet Grace—yet hast thou no escape; and I would have thee put on it the best face. The fair lady, who now shares this monarch's throne, doth give much promise to all Muscovy; and we

hope her charms and loveliness will work the tyrant's reformation. I have at heart the weal of my countrymen, and now do I anticipate much good for their cause. We will look favourably on this courtesy, nor throw away the chance of amity and good understanding 'twixt Muscovy's sovereign and the English settlers in his dominions."

"I have some strange misgivings," observed the physician, "yet I own it were discourteous to refuse, nay, yet more—perilous—for such distrust of the barbarian's favour, would lead to certain mischief: of the two evils, take we the least."

"And be thy daughter's loyal cavalier, her country's ambassador. So, friend Walter, my groom shall apparel a palfrey for the lady, an' thou admit me for her knight."

It was some solace to the anxious father, this proffered escort of Sir Thomas; and forthwith repairing to give his child notice, the parties

immediately proceeded to equip for presentation.

The appointments of the household of Sir Thomas became the dignity of his royal mistress, and speedily all were in readiness to repair to the palace. A guard of honour awaited to precede the ambassador, who might be thought, in some degree, to forsake the rigour of etiquette, in the duties of groom to Grace Wilmington, as she mounted her palfrey, in not suffering any of his numerous attendants to officiate in his place—yet he had a secret motive in thus surrounding her by this respectful protection, assured that he could thereby the more effectually shield her from any danger or annoyance that might be the result of this interview.

Nor had Master George Tuberville, though much he sought the favour, an opportunity of assisting the lady to mount her palfrey ; and now

the gallant cavalcade took the direction of the palace of the Czar.

First came a troop of Strelitz habited in red, with their pointed caps and long flowing sashes, to which were tied their sabres. On foot, right and left, walked the police of the city, clad in red and green; the initials of their corps embroidered on their breasts; their badge of office, a broom and shovel. Then followed the household officers of the ambassador, clad in scarlet; but so loaded with lace, that their dresses appeared to be of gold. Then came Sir Thomas Randolph himself, having on his right the daughter of Walter Wilmington, followed by the doctor and Master Tuberville.

The throng was great as they advanced, though at first there was a general clearance of the way, when it was reported that it was the Englisher; the good people of Moscow remembering that the palfrey on which Grace was

seated, was the identical one which, it had been reported, that no less a personage than his Satanic majesty had bestriden.

Howbeit, those who ventured now upon a closer inspection of the rider, were for classing her with a very opposite order of spiritual beings, and not without reason.

Although her features were not perfectly discernible through the veil of Mechlin lace which fell down to her boddice, yet there was enough of the mystery of beauty visible, to cause a longing for the reality ; and her shape, which exhibited all its native elegance, was set off by a costume which bespoke her good taste, but more particularly did the covering of her small feet excite the admiration of the crowd.

And be it known, it was no little rarity they displayed, inasmuch as Sir Thomas Randolph, when he arrived in Moscow, was the bearer, amongst other magnificent presents, of a pair of silk stockings for the reigning Czarina,

though it were difficult to determine which of them it might be.

Now we all know, or should know, that the first pair of silk stockings ever seen in Great Britain was on the toes of royal Elizabeth; and her estimate of the value of such an article of dress may be conceived, when it was confidently anticipated, that the present of a single pair would propitiate the good will of an empress.

Certain it is, however, that, on the knight's arrival, there was a void in the catalogue of Czarinas, who, in Moscow, followed each other in rapid succession: and again, it must be taken into consideration, that the aforesaid article of apparel was, at that day, a commodity totally unknown to the ladies of that empire; which accounts satisfactorily for the knight's presentation to Grace Wilmington of that elegant article, for which he could then find no worthier owner.

But, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," gentle

reader, and the consideration which was shown to the garter, we implore you to bestow on the stocking, which the elegant foot of Grace Wilmington now displayed.

With reluctance we leave the friendly party to proceed on their way, attracted by the cries of distress, which issued from the now deserted mansion of the ambassador.

Our facetious acquaintance, Jocko, had become necessary to the sociability of the English party, and an especial favourite of Grace Wilmington; nor can we wonder at a predilection for Jocko, when we are gravely assured—nay, when it has been unequivocally declared by Dr. Adam Clarke, that the first mother of the human race was beguiled by a monkey.

Jocko had seen Grace when she was attired for the palace; his admiration knew no bounds, and it was testified by every expressive grimace and varied somerset. But when Sir Thomas handed her forth, followed by the physician

and his secretary, to the exclusion of his own company, his grief knew no bounds. Springing to the casement, he effected his return to the ambassador's apartments. They were deserted; not a valet, not a groom, was left behind to console him, and painful and protracted were his cries of distress.

But the philosophy of Jocko came to his relief in that unavailing flow of regret. First he looked out of the window, and then he beheld the sentinel, armed with a matchlock, beating time to and fro; and Jocko, perhaps, bethought himself of the glory of his race, when they emulated the discipline of the Macedonian phalanx, to the wonder of Alexander the Great; and, concluding that he was of a warlike turn, he shouldered a loaded blunderbuss, which was suspended to the wall of the study of the ambassador, and with martial dignity paraded the apartment.

Now, whether premeditatedly or not, we are

not prepared to say ; but no sooner was the ambassador's cavalcade out of sight, than a Muscovite of suspicious appearance passed the sentinel on duty unchallenged, and entered the private apartments of the ambassador.

The system of espionage, in that day, was in no degree less profound in Russia than at the present. Family spies were regularly appointed, and the privacy of conversation, almost of thought, was as much pried into as now : albeit it was then confined to the dominions of the Czars ; and we feel warranted in conjecturing that the individual alluded to, who had been allowed to enter the ambassador's study, was of the order of such industrious individuals, labouring in his avocation.

When the door opened, Jocko was essaying the fit of a coat of his excellency, the more completely to figure in his military capacity, and had put on one of his master's beavers ; this, however, almost concealed his face, and

the coat was put on with the back before, so that his person was almost concealed in front; and at the approach of the intruder, he remained statue-like in observation.

The spy, who set a value upon time, was hastily turning over the portfolio of Sir Thomas, when Jocko, having some intuitive notion that all was not correct, took up the loaded weapon and presented it.

The poor spy raised his eyes, but closed them again, tottered, and sank on his knees, muttering some unintelligible jargon to Pug, who, feeling that he had the persuasive side of the argument, followed it up. Then ensued a pantomime of bobbing, and ducking, and praying, much to the amusement of Jocko, who would have kept up the farce, but that the Muscovite effected his escape.

How far the English nation is to this day beholden to Pug, for the preservation of diplomatic mystery, is not on record; but it remains

for us to relate, that the unlucky stars of Jocko led him to ape his betters, in a more intellectual capacity, and that squatting himself at the desk of the ambassador's secretary, he armed himself with a pen ; and the revisal which the papers of Master George Tuberville underwent, was such, that on the secretary's return, the hand of Jocko being recognised, the secretary, armed with a cane, inflicted punishment on the hide of the delinquent, more comprehended by him than the contents of papers, for the study of which he received such compensation. Such, however, was the havoc made with Master Tuberville's letters, that the only intelligible draft that remained of the budget of his correspondence that day, was the following epistle :—

To Spencer.

If I should now forget, or not remember thee,
 Thou, Spencer, might'st a foule rebuke, and shame impute to
 mee,

For I to open shew did love thee passing well,
 And thou wert he at parture, whom I loathde to bid farewell.
 And as I went thy friend, so I continue still,
 No better prooffe thou canst then this desire of true good will.
 I doe remember well when needes I should away,
 And that the poste would licence vs, no longer time to stay :
 Thou wrongst me by the fist, and holding fast my hand,
 Did'st craue of me to send thee newes, and how I liked the
 land.

It is a sandie soile, no very fruitfull vaine,
 More waste and wooddie grounds there are, then closes fit for
 graine,

Yet graine there growing is, which they vntimely take,
 And cut or eare the corn be ripe, the mowe it on a stacke,
 And laying sheafe by sheafe, their haruest so they dry ;
 They make the greater haste, for feare the frost the corne de-
 stroy ;

For in the winter time, so glarie is the ground,
 As neither grasse, nor other graine, in pastures may be found,
 In coms the cattell then, the sheepe, the colt, the cowe,
 Fast by his bed the Mowsike then a lodging doth allowe,
 Whom he with fodder feeds, and holds as deere as life :
 And thus the weare the winter with the Mowsike and his
 wife.

Seuen months the winter dures, the glare it is so great,
 As it is May before he turne his ground to sowe his wheate.

The bodies eke that die vnburied lie they then,
Laid up in coffins made of firre, as well the poorest men,
As those of greater state : the cause is lightly found,
For that in winter time they cannot come to breake the ground.
And wood so plenteous is, quite throughout all the land,
As rich and poore, at time of death, assur'd of coffins stand.
Perhaps thou musest much, how this may stand with reason,
That bodies dead can vncorrupt abide so long a season,
Take this for certaine trothe, as soon as heate is gone,
The force of colde the body binds as hard as any stone,
Without offence at all to any living thing :
And so they lye in perfect state, till next returne of spring.
Their beasts be like to ours, as farre as I can see,
For shape, and shewe, but somewhat lesse of bulke and bone
they be.

Of watrish taste, the flesh not firme, like English beefe,
And yet it seru's them very well, and is a good reliefe :
Their sheep are very small, sharpe singled, handfull long ;
Great store of fowle on sea and land, the Moorish reedes
among ;

The greatnes of the store doeth make the prices lesse,
Besides in all the land they know, not how good meate to
dresse.

They vse neither broach nor spit, but when the stoue they
heate,

They put their victuals in a pan, and so they bake their meate.

No pewter to be had, no dishes but of wood,

No vse of trenchers, cups cut out of birche are very good.

They vse but wooden spoones, which hanging in a case

Each Mowsike at his girdle ties, and thinks it no disgrace.

With whittles two or three, the better man the moe,

The chiefest Russes in the land, with spoone and kniues doe goe.

Their houses are not huge of building, but they say,
They plant them in the loftiest ground, to shift the snow
away,

Which in the winter time, each where full thicke doth lie :
Which makes them haue the more desire to set their houses
hie.

No stone worke is in vse, their roofes of rafters bee,
One linked in another fast, their wals are all of tree.
Of masts both long, and large, with mosse put in betweene,
To keepe the force of weather out, I never earst have seene
A grosse deuise so good, and on the rooffe they lay
The burthen barke, to rid the raine, and sudden showres
away.

In every room a stoue, to serue the winter turne,
Of wood they have sufficient store, as much as they can
burne.

They have no English glasse, of slices of a rocke,
Hight Sluda they their windowes make, that English glasse
doth mocke,

They cut it very thinne, and sow it with a thred
In pretie order like to panes, to serue their present need ;
No other glasse, good faith, doth giue a better light :
And sure the rocke is nothing rich, the cost is very slight.
The chieffest place is that, where hangs the god by it,
The owner of the house himselve doth neuer sit,
Unlesse his better come, to whom he yealds the seat :
The stranger bending to the god, the ground with brow must
beat,

And in that very place which they most sacred deeme,
The stranger lies ; a token that his guest he doth esteeme.
Where he is wont to haue a beares skinne for his bed,
And must, instead of pillow, clap his saddle to his head ;

In Russia other shift there is not to be had,
For where the bedding is not good, the boalsters are but bad.
I mused very much, what made them so to lie,
Sith in their country downe is rife, and feathers out of crie :
Vnlesse it be because the countrey is so hard,
They feare by nicenesse of a bed their bodies would be mard.
I wist thee oft with vs, saue that I stood in feare
Thou wouldst have loathed to haue layd thy limmes upon a
 beare,

As I and Stafford did, that was my mate in bed :
And yet (we thanke the God of heaven) we both right well
 haue sped.

Loe thus I make an ende : none other newes to thee,
But that the countrey is too colde, the people beastly bee.
I write not all I know, I touch but here and there,
For if I should, my penne would pinch, and eke offend I
 fear.

Who so shall read this verse, coniecture of the rest,
And thinke by reason of our trade, that I do thinke the best.
But if no traffique were, then could I boldly pen
The hardnesse of the soile, and eke the maners of the men.
They say the lion's paw gives iudgment of the beast ;
And so may you deeme of the great, by reading of the least.

CHAPTER XII.

“Jean Koltzo et ses compagnons parurent aussi devant le prince pour lui offrir le royaume de Sibérie.

“A la cour, sur la grande place, on répétait avec ivresse, *Dieu a envoyé un nouvel empire à la Russie.*”

“Jean Koltzo baissant avec humilité sa tête coupable devant le tzar et les boyards, n’entendait plus que des paroles de bienveillance.—KARAMSIN.

“Il se vantait,—de savoir *conserver la dignité de son rang*, en donnant l’ordre de mettre en pièces un éléphant qu’on lui avait envoyé de Perse, parce que cet animal n’avait pas voulu s’agenouiller devant lui.”—KARAMSIN.

THE centre pillar which supported the gilded roof of the Granovitaia Palata, formed an *echelon* for the display of the jewels and plate of the Czar. It was literally concealed by the pyramids of gold and silver cups, goblets, and vases, shaped into many quaint forms, as birds and pelicans, swans and peacocks, with appro-

priate devices, and some were of such massive proportions that the united efforts of twelve men could not lift them.

From the entrance to the throne a triple range of benches on either side were occupied by the dignitaries of the land, their robes of gold *glazeta*, and their caps of the blackest fox-skin. Before the throne were the Rindas, and those youths selected, from their beauty, for the guard of honour, were on the present occasion in full costume; high white kolpaks, the double chain of gold crossed upon the breast, and armed with scimitars. The servants of the palace, to the number of three hundred, wore the sumptuous livery of the Czar, and were distinguished from the other dignitaries by the gold chain which was fastened on the chest.

Upon a platform of lower degree, and on the right of the throne, was seated the Czarevitch; and near him stood the favourites, Basmanoff the younger and Viazemsky.

Before the throne were two raised cushions, which were to bear the crowns of Astrakan and Kazan. The steps and platform, on which were placed the royal seats, were covered with cloth of gold.

The *appareil* of the thrones well became the grandeur of the palace of the Czar; nor had the officers of the crown neglected an iota that could contribute to its magnificence. The ancient state-chair of the monarchs of Muscovy was quadrangular at the base, from which four gilded pillars sprung, to support a canopy surmounted by a double-headed eagle and cross of solid gold. On the front and sides of the base were bas-reliefs, curiously engraved, illustrative of battles with the Persian and Saracen.

But in this ostentatious display of the wealth of the Kremlin, the antique throne was vacated for the ivory state-chair, the former present of Russia's Greek ally. The elaborate carving and workmanship it displayed were deservedly ad-

mired. It was over-topped by a canopy covered in raspberry-coloured velvet, and bordered with gold lace and fringe. At the four corners were affixed feathers of the ostrich of a corresponding colour to the drapery, and the front was adorned with the arms of the Czars.

At the entrance of the hall were divers groups awaiting the arrival of the monarch. On one of these individuals the eye of the Czarevitch was incessantly turned, whilst the same interest seemed manifest in the looks of the vast concourse of noblemen there assembled;—it was Grace Wilmington, supported on the arm of the British ambassador. Her veil had not yet been thrown aside, and it was altogether matter of speculation the charms which it concealed.

On a sudden a flourish of trumpets announced the approach of his majesty; a solemn silence succeeded, and even the Czarevitch, who now stood up uncovered, ceased a somewhat ani-

mated discussion upon the novel costume of the stranger.

And now appeared the elder Basmanoff, bearing the imperial globe of Vladimir.

Then followed two high dignitaries, supporting on velvet cushions the crowns of Astrakan and Kazan. At length, beneath a canopy of crimson velvet, which was supported over their heads, entered their majesties, and at once that vast assembly bent forward almost to the ground.

But one there, to the scandal of the orthodox Muscovites, made no such submission. It was Grace ;—a low curtsy, as she threw back her veil, acknowledged the Empress of Russia, who, alike forgetful of her elevated rank and the imposing ceremony of a court, pressed a kiss upon her brow, as she passed on in the suite of the Czar.

If the mind could have divested itself for an instant of the record of his crimes, Ivan at that

moment, his face beaming with animation, and his commanding person robed in unequalled splendour, would have inspired admiration and awe.

He was happy once again,—if the guilty can forget,—in that dawn of affection for his beautiful bride, and keenly alive to the attributes of glory, this was an auspicious day that had risen, in possession of the loveliest woman in his empire, and the acquisition of vast dominions.

His countenance was illumined by a ray of benevolence, long a stranger to his features.

The monarch wore the ancient crown of Muscovy over a skull-cap of the blackest fox-skin. It was of filigree work of gold, surmounted by an elegant cross of the same metal, and to the minutest fibres of the basket-work were strung a profusion of rare jewels and pearls. On his breast was the gold cross of Monomach. The train of his porphyry robe was supported by six princes of the realm, and

was oppressive with the weight of precious stones and embroidery of gold and silver. In his right hand he held the sceptre, refulgent with the light of diamonds.

As he passed him, the English ambassador was honoured with a gracious smile, and the glance of admiration which he bestowed upon Grace Wilmington was only equalled by that which he turned upon his bride. Commanding the attendants to see the English party accommodated near the throne, the Czar and his Empress-elect ascended the platform.

Marfa Sabakin, for as yet the nuptials had not been performed, was robed in splendour becoming the throne she had been raised to adorn.

A tiara of gems put to blush the beam of day. Her outward garment was of a material not known in the present age, but of such rare and expensive fabric, that none but the Czars had ventured to encourage its manufacture. It

was lined with the purest white ermine. Her jewelled red boots corresponded in brilliancy with the tiara; whilst the lovely creature who was thus adorned, most effectively contrasted the radiance of her dress with the living light of her beautiful countenance.

If the expression of admiration was hushed in the august presence, and if respect forbade the subject to fix the glance of rapture on that regal beauty,—it rested with more intensity on the bewitching loveliness of Grace Wilmington.

The Czar himself snatched a furtive glance at the angelic maiden, and but for the present engrossing object of his love, no doubt had followed up the inspection with after thought. But Marfa was the all-absorbing theme of his present passion, and the English girl but for a moment her rival.

The imposing silence was at length interrupted by the official announcement of the ambassador of Siberia's viceroy. A long enume-

ration of all the titles of the despot flattered the royal ear, which was about to receive one not less imposing than any of that category of power, and his eye alternately rested now upon the cone-shaped and jewelled crown of the khans of Kazan, now upon that of the khans of Astrakan, with its lofty pear-shaped summit and crescent of pearls, reflecting their radiance in its sparkling vivacity.

But the throned daughter of Vassili Sabakin was animated with the thought of the valour that had won those illustrious records of her country's glory, and in that dream of heroes, one was singled out in her secret thought; and as her young cheek blushed in sympathy, the idol of her virgin love met the eye of the empress of his country and his heart, for Koltzo, the Donskoï Cossacque, now prostrated himself at the foot of the throne.

He, the condemned felon, whilom doomed to the stake, upon whose name rested the ignominy

of a robber, was honoured with dignity and respect; and the daring freebooter of the Wolga, who had braved his sovereign's laws, had vanquished his army, was now a suppliant for mercy, with the crown of a mighty country for the redemption of his life.

“ Rise, Koltzo !” said the monarch, with solemnity. “ The sentence of thy past deeds be blotted out from our records, and by this glorious conquest we cancel our displeasure. See to it, Boyars, and let the annals of holy Russia transmit the names of these brave Cossacques to posterity, with the redeeming glory of their heroic deeds. Rise, John Koltzo,” repeated the Czar, extending his hand, “ and by this token thou art forgiven, gainsay it who will ; for we would,” continued the monarch, as he threw a glance around upon the Boyars, “ that all our faulty subjects did square accounts with us so well ;” and the Cossacque kissed the hand of his sovereign.

Then advanced the body-guard of Yermak's ambassador, a weather-beaten, hardy troop. Each man was the bearer of a present of rare furs from Siberia, beyond all value; and in the centre of the troop, an ataman of the corps carried upon a cushion of zibelline skins, the oval-topped crown of the kingdom of Koutchoum, khan of Sibir and Tobol. Koltzo, taking the precious burthen, again approached the throne; and as he deposited it at the feet of the Czar, the cannon of the Kremlin broke its thunders, with the acclamations of the assembled crowds in the wide area of the Kremlin.

The warrior of the Don for a moment raised his eyes to the bride of the Czar. They met hers, which had not strayed from the soldier, for she exulted in his glory; and as if her maiden hopes had realised all earthly happiness in that triumph of the hero, she looked upon him in unspeakable pride, as if she shared in the triumph of the handsome Cossacque, nor remem-

bered, in that delicious reverie, the despot who was henceforth to rule her will—for the secret recesses of her soul at least were free; and he who had bestowed a crown away, had won the empire of her heart.

Upon them was cast many a furtive look. Theodore Basmanoff, who had outraged the lovely bride of his Czar, felt as the doomed, for a word from those lips would have hurled him to the tortures of the rack. But Marfa was the messenger of peace and mercy; and if he encountered her glance, the young Boyar, who had raised his thought to her, saw there reflected the calm of indifference and forgiveness. Nor dared he face the Cossacque, he, the high-born Boyar's son, though he marked him for vengeance; but the ticklish ground on which he stood, if his version of the affray at the isba with Koltzo were ever put to the test of investigation, blunted for the present the weapon of his hate.

The reception of the Siberian envoy was concluded with a present from the Czar of a sumptuous dress, which his majesty had worn, the highest honour then conferred by the Russian despots on a subject, and a costly cuirass and helmet for Yermak, the Russian Pizarro, with promise of all favour and assistance for securing the empire that had been conquered by a few hundred Cossacques, and annexed to the realms of Muscovy.

It was a day of unexampled glory for Russia, and the ambitious monarch was fully sensible of the *éclat* which it would reflect upon his foreign relations. In the pride of his admiration for Marfa Sabakin, his pique towards the English queen was surmounted, and in his present mood with the British nation, he readily listened to his betrothed's account of the hospitality of Walter Wilmington, which she gratefully acknowledged. The Czar availed himself of the opportunity which Koltzo's arrival

afforded, to impress the English with the importance of the added grandeur of his dominions. Furthermore, the ambassador from the Persian Schach was waiting for audience. The auspicious event was seized upon to grant the Eastern envoy reception; and no sooner was Yermak's ambassador dismissed, than the Schach's was admitted to the quadruply-crowned autocrat.

Then did the monarch's ears for the first time receive the gracious sound from foreign lips, which proclaimed him Oto-Czar of Muscovy, Kazan, Astrakan, and his new empire of Sibir.

But though it stands on record that the crowns of dominion multiplied for Ivan Vassilivitch, his wits certainly kept not pace with his acquisitions, as the reader must admit from the following record.

The Schach's envoy, enumerating the royal

presents of the Persian, omitted not to descant upon the rare qualities of an elephant, the donation of his master to the Czar, and which was now waiting in the court of the palace. Amongst other essentials which the intelligent animal had been taught, was to kneel, when bidden, in the presence of royalty.

Delighted at the thought that the instinct of a brute would discriminate between the majesty of the king and the subject, the Czar, inviting the court to be witness of the elephant's discernment, led his young bride to the balcony, and the noble animal, caparisoned with Asiatic magnificence, was brought in full view of the mighty monarch. But in vain did his keepers essay to make him bend his knees to Ivan Vassilivitch, the stubborn quadruped resisted to the last ; and the despot, who piqued himself on his elevated and kingly mind, and on preserving the dignity of his rank, gave orders

that the Persian elephant should be cut to pieces on the instant, for not kneeling in his presence.

Conspicuous in that vast throng was the lovely girl on the arm of the British ambassador. Her dress was in some degree foreign to the fashion of the country, which might account for the interest at first excited by her appearance, but wherever she turned, a murmur of admiration followed. As if each glance that was rivetted upon her had the power of kindling a deeper blush, her eloquent cheek vied at length with the deepest carmine that Muscovite art ever bestowed to impart a fictitious charm, and which, according to Russians, was the standard of feminine beauty.

Her young mind, as yet unaccustomed to the daring gaze of man, shrunk from the bold glances that were fixed upon her, whilst her innate notions of chastity repelled with indignation the stare of admiration, and she clung

still more closely to the protecting arm of Sir Thomas Randolph.

The Czarevitch, impelled by curiosity, advanced to take a nearer view of the foreign maid. That abrupt and marked scrutiny drew forth a glance of reproach, which glance so fixed and dazzled the prince—the voluptuary, the volatile, the amorous, in short, the worthy son of his execrable sire—that he had to recall to his memory, and be it confessed, with some difficulty, his last and newly-made wife.

Entranced, he gazed upon Grace Wilmington, heedless of the faithful partner of his revels, who now stood beside him, the constant caterer for his highness's pleasures and amusements, Theodore Basmanoff. As the beautiful object of his intense admiration departed, he turned to address his friend, whose cunning smile revealed to the prince that his ecstasy had not passed unnoticed.

“Didst see—didst note? The girl—the

angel! St. Serge be witness, if the gates of heaven enclose a fairer one. My heaven be this earth—for here I yield my soul itself to worship woman's beauty."

"Heyday! but married some score hours, and here's a case of infidelity in the first quarter of the honey-moon!"

"I'll be divorced!"

"And then?"

"Wive the Englisher's child."

"Divorced! with all my heart; but there will be no marriage with the heretic."

"She shall recant her faith," said the Czarevitch, in an absolute tone.

"First you would have her, prince, accept your love."

"Would she think of refusing the Czarevitch?"

"Those foreigners are sometimes very odd. But we can try."

“ If not by fair, by foul means—she is mine.”

“ Now you reason ; and your most humble servant and faithful counsellor becomes again high minister to your excellence, in such affairs of state as divorce, matrimonial propositions ; and, if necessary, abduction, seduction, accommodation, &c. &c. &c.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Hadst not thou been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,
Quoted, and sign'd, to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind.
Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a pause,
When I spake darkly what I purpos'd—
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
As bid me tell my tale in express words—
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me.”

THE pageant was o'er ; night fast invaded the empire of this monarch of many crowns, and with the past was enrolled the splendour and glory of that memorable day. With it scemed to vanish the joy of the royal bride, as if her happiness had set with the rays of the sinking orb of light. Her ingenuous mind ascribed

more glory to the heroes who had conquered, than to the sovereign who had acquired a new empire, and the Cossacque of the Wolga was paramount, in her untutored thought, to the Czar of Russia.

Her sovereign, however, was happy in his triumph and his love on this memorable occasion, and sought to read, in the soft eyes of his bride, respondent bliss.

The Czar, in his estimate of woman, had linked ambition somewhat too closely with love; and as he gazed enraptured on the beautiful being before him, robed in regal splendour, and decked with jewels of inestimable value, the offerings of his devotion, he felt quite secure, that the fair form thus gorgeously apparelled, enshrined a heart all his own.

But the casket, not the gem within it, was the bargain of the satyr who now breathed his love to that spotless creature, the pos-

session of whom, by him, was like a sacrifice of apostate nature to a heathen's shrine: and the tyrant, whose words of passion saluted the ear of the virgin Czarina, appeared to wither this cherished object of his affections; the insidious worm of decay was already eating into her heart, and her death-pale cheek now first betrayed life's painful struggle.

“My honoured and great lord,” observed Marfa, as she respectfully replied to the anxious questioning of the Czar, “I pray you heed it not—’twill pass away when relieved from my inquietude: it grieves me, that your slave, my father, has not appeared to answer the gracious summons of your majesty, and it is reported, that he is no where to be found.”

The wrath of the monarch kindled, even in that moment of anxiety for Marfa's health; but the cause, which he conjectured would be

quickly removed, consoled him; and, summoning the attendants in the ante-chamber, the delay of inquiries and failure in discovery of the new Czarina's father, might have been attended by a fearful castigation, had not the elder Basmanoff been prepared, at that very moment, with an answer for his majesty, to the effect that the metropolitan, accompanied by Vassili Sabakin, solicited immediate and private audience of the Lady Marfa Sabakin.

Ivan frowned on hearing the name of Philip. A dark suspicion entered his breast; but the exclamation of genuine joy which, on the announcement of Vassili Sabakin, escaped the lips of his bride, turned the current of his thoughts, and his wrath and suspicion vanished, as the engrossing subject of his solicitude, his Marfa's health, rose paramount to all other considerations. As if only to look on the fair face of that angelic creature, turned the tide of his vengeance to benevolence and

virtue, thus even the wrath which had risen on the announcement of the metropolitan, yielded to a hope, that the head of the church, influenced by the reputed virtues of his betrothed Czarina, had come to sanction his espousals, and prepare her mind for that august ceremony. With these reviving anticipations, the monarch left the apartment, and gave orders for the admittance of the prelate and his companion to a private audience of his bride.

The Czar was so entirely taken up with his new idol, that the myrmidons of his power, the executors and administrators of his will, on some important subjects, were left in suspense of their operations, waiting for further orders. One of the above-mentioned, Theodore Basmanoff, had lingered for hours to gain the private ear of his majesty. The moment was opportune, as the Czar left the apartment of the bride, and the young Boyar

dropped a word in his majesty's hearing which secured for him an immediate interview, the purport of which was the ruin of the venerable metropolitan of Moscow ; but whether or no the machinations of the tyrant and his minion were carried out, time and the pages before us may reveal.

Whilst the sanctity of his presence hallowed the interview of the betrothed of the Czar, and her reputed father, the destruction of his life and reputation was plotting in the cabinet of the despot. The doomed churchman, whose name almost haunted the chambers of the Kremlin, was at that moment also the subject of deep and secret cogitation between the Boyarina Basmanoff and her worthy coadjutor, the Dutch physician, Bomelius, in an apartment adjoining the new bride's.

The Lady Gregoriovna Basmanoff was much changed within a few hours ; a restless night had not composed her disordered thoughts, but

had made sad havoc in her features. Though her pride had undergone a fearful ordeal, it had received some balsam from the repudiation of Katinka as her own offspring, and the house of Basmanoff was thus released from the disgrace of a *mésalliance*; still she could not forget this blow to her ambition—to have been so suddenly awakened from her dream of power was too much for her equanimity.

The wily Jew, however, deeply interested in her success, or compromised by her defeat, betrayed no symptom that could be trusted, for his ever smiling face had become a mask whereon the workings of his mind were not revealed.

Had he undergone the tortures of the rack, it is more than probable that this imperturbable expression would have remained.

But if his smile was immovable, not so was his tongue; its eloquence and activity would have beguiled a Christian saint to become

an apostate; and whatever the Boyarinia had been, she was now, from circumstances, in his power.

“It works but slowly,” whispered the lady; “no symptoms appear as yet, save that she is very pale.”

“This should be the hour,” smiled the Jew, “that the first indications of its operation were apparent. She took it all?” inquired Bome-lius, who had been answered this question before, but seemed to need further confirmation.

“I tell thee all—even the dregs of the vial did I infuse in her morning cup.”

“’Tis well,” observed Bomelius, musing.

“Would it were well,” muttered the Lady Gregoriovna. “But I am cheated of my reward; what boots it now to me who is my lawful Czarina. I have no daughter left to succeed to the throne. And now would I fain restore the life I have undermined. Say, friend, hast thou no counteracting drug to render abortive

the insidious but slow workings of the first. Crime for crime's sake is twofold."

"Hush these reflections! they come too late; I tell thee again, that nought on earth—not the prayers of all the prelates of thy vaunted church—could avail to save her."

"I had forgotten," mused the Boyarinia, who wore no mask to the Jew, "I had forgotten thou wast an unbeliever."

The imperturbable Jew smiled away the reflection, but loved her not the more for it.

"Thou must overcome these scruples. Nay, hast thou not a secret motive to reconcile thee to the deed? Dost forget that thy son was compromised in his endeavour to frustrate the arrival of the lady? and now the witnesses of the abortive effort, the Cossacques, are more than a match for him in court favour. I have even some misgivings that this apparently simple maiden, thy imperial mistress!" added the Jew, with emphasis, "is not the gracious

angel of mercy she would appear, and waits but her nuptials for vengeance. Then woe to the Basmanoffs!"

"Ah!" ejaculated the Lady Gregoriovna, "'tis well thought on Thou sayest we cannot be detected?"

"No! unless thou dost, as penance for thy sin, publish thy confession of it!" and the Jew almost laughed.

But the colloquy of the worthies was suddenly interrupted by a loud exclamation from the adjoining chamber of the Czarina; it was followed by reiterated accents of anguish in a female's voice, intermingled with sobs, and accompanied by the deep and faltering tones of man's distress.

The Jew in a moment fastened his ear to a crevice in the door, but a silence ensued, at intervals interrupted by stifled sighs; at length he distinctly heard the Greek ritual of the administration of the Eucharist,—the solemn

invocation on the bread and wine; and as it was administered, there flashed across the unbeliever's mind a scheme so fraught with certain mischief to the prelate and safety to himself, that the Jew for a moment revelled in the pride of his inventive faculties, ere he proceeded to put in execution his newly-made plan, and immediately obtained access to the Czar.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ La sua viltà confessa
Chi l'altrui forza accusa.”

“ Il timor de' tiranni
Co' deboli è furor.”

“ If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me of half a million.”

THE monarch, impatient at the protracted interview of the pastor of the church with his betrothed Czarina, as every moment seemed to rob him of that blissful presence which had become indispensable to his happiness, was about to return to her chamber, when, most opportunely, he encountered his favourite physician, Bomelius.

In a hurried voice, and with all the earnest-

ness of a devoted slave, the Jew intimated that the Boyarina Basmanoff, concerned for her lovely charge, had commissioned him to advise his majesty to shorten the visit of the prelate, for the young lady, from sounds that had issued from the apartment, was evidently in much mental anguish and distress; and he, in his capacity of physician, seconded the prudent counsel of the lady of the bedchamber, as the elected bride was of a delicate frame, and the ceremony of her inauguration for the throne needed all her energies and strength, which it was to be feared the prelate in his mistaken zeal might overtask.

Well knew Bomelius that he had touched upon a sensitive chord, and that the fiend was roused again in the monarch as he hastened, at the insinuation, to the apartment of Marfa Sabakin.

But the resolves which fired him to deeds of extermination, on the first wrathful impulse,

ever found a check in the imposing aspect of Philip; and the position of the present party, as he broke in upon their privacy, offered a spectacle of such Christian love and reverence, that it awed this butcher of the human race.

The beautiful countenance of Marfa Sabakin had changed much in this short interval; her eyes were red with weeping, and there was an expression of restless anxiety, which the Czar observed at a glance. On his entrance, Vassili Sabakin and his daughter prostrated themselves at his feet.

The Czar instantly raised Marfa from the ground.

“My lord—my great master!” in faltering accents, exclaimed his bride, “thy slave craves thy mercy—thy forgiveness!”

Ivan frowned upon the metropolitan; his suspicious breast at once was fired. The churchman had, perhaps, worked upon that

gentle mind to resist her nuptials with her monarch.

“ We will hear thy fault ere we grant thy prayer for pardon.”

“ Thy slave, great Czar, believed herself the honest offspring of this worthy man, who, from her infancy, did idolize her with a father’s love. Now, by thy mighty will, which makes her a partner of thy high estate, does he proclaim her no child of his, but a poor foundling; and in that zeal for truth which ever kept him in the path of honour, comes he to disclaim all right to the high station of alliance to thy majesty, which rank would invest him with honour and wealth, to which he has no lawful claim.”

The Czar looked round in wonderment on the priest, the prostrate merchant, and on his bride.

“ Rise, sirrah, for thou hast nought to be forgiven but thine honesty, a crime somewhat

of the rarest, methinks. Most of our knavish vassals, in thy stead, would not have undeceived us. And since thou hast performed a parent's part to this sweet girl, receive thy reward, for we invest thee with the rank which, by Russia's law, pertains to the father of a royal bride. Vassili Sabakin, henceforth art thou and thy descendants Boyars of Muscovy, spite this rebellious priest, who would forbid the bans," he continued, turning a sneer upon the metropolitan.

"The church, of which I am the anointed servant, has opposed the bans. As priest, I will now intercede with the synod in thy behalf, O Czar, and as a man pray for thy happiness and weal, for in this fair and spotless maiden, methinks, I see an instrument of Heaven's mercy; and God grant that so pure and good a wife may effect, by the bright example of her virtues, the regeneration of the earthly lord of this vast land. Heaven's will be done!"

“ Then, since thou dost congratulate us upon our choice, good priest, we will square accounts with thee in compliment, and felicitate thee on thy returning wits, of which we shall exact a proof, by commanding thee to officiate at our speedy nuptials.

“ And now, my charmer, hie thee to rest, and woo the roses back into thy cheek, whence they have been estranged, somewhat too long for my liking. And hark ye, Sir Priest, no more of these sentimental gossips, we beseech thee, or thou wilt make a saint of my bride before her time; in which case, by the “ Virgin of the bleeding cheek,” thou shalt bear her company to heaven, or we are not Czar of Muscovy!”

The Jew Bomelius marvelled much when he did see the worthy metropolitan leave the palace with a whole skin; and when it was made known that Philip had sanctioned the nuptials of the monarch, his plans were thwarted for the present.

The confidence with which he had spoken to the Boyarinia on their security from detection, was not quite shared by him, but assumed, rather to invigorate the faculties of his colleague in the perpetration of their schemes, and to strengthen her against the inroads of conscience, lest remorse should break in upon the darkness of their deeds with the light of discovery.

The villain Bomelius had a stout heart for nefarious enterprises; nor was he ever inconvenienced by the compunctions of a guilty mind. That troublesome visitor, conscience, which steals at the midnight hour to the couch of the sinner, and is, in his waking dreams, a spectral shadow in his path, identifying itself in companionship with him, and peopling his solitude with unwelcome guests—this intruder kept at a most respectful distance from the Jew, who, in fact, had struggled with his enemy, till he had fairly come off victorious, and only

availed himself of its services to practise on the weaknesses of his fellow-men.

The individual now marked for destruction by the wary and persevering Bomelius, was his rival in science, the stumbling-block in his path, the *Mordecai* at his gate—the worthy Doctor Wilmington.

But it was no easy matter to circumvent the Englishman. The Jew had grappled with science for its abuse—Walter Wilmington had sounded its depths for the benefit of suffering humanity. With the former it was the weapon of destruction—with the latter it was the balm of health and life.

Of the numerous physicians ostentatiously entertained by the Czar, none stood in higher estimation than the Englishman, though Bomelius was the professed favourite. It was from Wilmington aloné he received the remedies prescribed for himself, as if the line of distinction were drawn in the Czar's mind on

their relative capabilities. One was the confidential guardian of his own life, the other was the scientific assassin of his enemies. The Jew's learning was profound; it baffled all his rivals but Wilmington. To such a pitch, chronicles aver, did his knowledge of the properties of poisons attain, that he played with human life for the edification of the Czar, experimenting on his subjects, till his proficiency was so great in the art of undermining the vital functions, that the wretched victim marked out for his operations, was dying unconsciously for days, and would expire, to the satisfaction of the monarch, at the precise hour, nay, at the very minute, that he had specified; whilst to the uninitiated observer, no trace revealed the insidious drug, which was commonly imbibed at the banquets of the treacherous despot.

Such a servant for a suspicious tyrant was invaluable, and the secret was long kept to themselves. The throned murderer had an

insatiate thirst for knowledge. He was endowed with extraordinary powers of memory; knew by heart the Bible, the Histories of Greece and Rome; of which knowledge he availed himself to adduce facts in support of despotism. He pretended to a profound policy when he exterminated systematically the most illustrious families, under the pretext that they were dangerous to the sovereign power; whilst the scythe of death that mowed them down, enriched his coffers with a golden harvest, and Bomelius came in for no inconsiderable share of the gleaning.

Prompted himself to experimentalise, the attainment of the art was not unattended with danger; and he renounced it in favour of his tried and more approved fashions of murder. But on one occasion curiosity induced him to probe the depth of the English physician's science, and he was ordered to examine a subject who, by the art of Bomelius, had resigned

the breath of life with the calmness of sleep, while the undisfigured body seemed to defy suspicion. Walter Wilmington pronounced the dead man the victim of poison, and the Czar hesitated not to apprise Bomelius of the verdict, having a secret misgiving that the Jew might be bribed to experimentalize upon his employer; and he determined, therefore, to inform him that his art was not above detection.

Hence arose the Jew's fear and hatred of the Englishman, as he fairly concluded that his practices were known to Wilmington.

CHAPTER XV.

“The sphinx is not a mere figment of the poets, but an animal bred in Africa, of the ape or monkey kind.”—TYSON.

Καὶ μὲν ἡ Σφίγξ γένος ἐστὶ πιθήκων (αὐτὸς γὰρ θεασάμενος γράψω) ἧς τὸ μὲν ἄλλο σῶμα λάσιόν ἐστιν, ὡς τοῖς ἄλλοις πιθήκοις· τὸ δὲ στέρνον ἄχρι γε αὐτοῦ τοῦ τραχήλου ἐψίλωται, μάζους δὲ γυναικὸς ἔχει, ἐρυθροῦ τινὸς βραχέος κεγχροειδοῦς ἐπαναστήματος ἅπαν ἐν κύκλῳ τό γεγυμνωμένον τοῦ σώματος περιθέοντος, καὶ εἰς πολλήν τινα εὐπρέπειαν ἀνθρωποφανεῖ ὄντι τῷ ἐν μέσῳ χρώματι συναρπαζομένου. Τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον ἐνεστρογγύλῳται μᾶλλον, καὶ εἰς γυναικείαν ἔλκει μορφήν.—PHILOSTORGIUS, HIST. ECCLES.

ALTHOUGH we are fully aware of the extent of human prejudice, and that the bounds of decorum may be supposed to have been trespassed upon, in associating with our story the personage already forced upon the reader's acquaintance

under the name of Jocko, yet such were the important transactions with which he was connected at the eventful epoch to which these pages refer, that were he omitted, it would be a flagrant breach of that trust which is reposed in the historian, since the annals of that period have handed down to us a necrological account of his extraordinary adventures. Again we entreat, in his behalf, the reader's forbearance and indulgence.

To those who peruse these pages, and are profoundly cognizant of the attributes of the *genus*, we need make no apology; but it is not generally known to all, that this ill-used and ill-appreciated race in the modern day, was once the idol of a mighty nation; for let who can deny, that the Egyptian sphinx was a monkey-god, immortalized with the eternal pyramids, or, in these unbelieving days, disown that once the islanders of Ceylon worshipped the race of Jocko. We refer all sceptics, an'

they be curious enough, to *Tyson*, *Linschoten*, and *Philostorgius*.

In the friendly circle of the benevolent Walter Wilmington, Jocko was fast regaining his somewhat forfeited claim to favour; for in daily intercourse with the ambassador's party, he had become a faithful messenger, expert, and silent (per force). His devotion to Grace was not very extraordinary; for we find, if Jocko ever forfeited the good-will of his master, or incurred the displeasure of his secretary, the physician's daughter soon effected a reconciliation; and, indeed, when she was made acquainted with the severe castigation he had undergone at the hands of Master Tuberville, she was rather chary of her friendly feeling towards the secretary for some days, insisting, much to the mortification of the poet, that the hieroglyphic grimaces of Pug were more edifying than all the figures of his mathematical problems, or his doggerel verses.

Tuberville, however, made the "amende honorable," by restoring his confidence to Jocko, and matters had again resumed their ordinary train at the doctor's. The ambassador was almost domiciled there with his friend, and it was of rare occurrence that the secretary could claim a tête-à-tête with Grace, to read to her the effusions of his pen since their last meeting. They were only listened to when Sir Thomas was absent.

Master Tuberville was not only a poet, but a man of science in his day—a profound mathematician and astronomer; and these were topics on which he could command and interest the attention of his auditors.

One morning, they were all attentively observing some astronomical demonstrations worked by Master George. The table was spread with plans, problems, and the necessary apparatus, and the secretary was accounting for the approach of an almost total eclipse of the

sun, which was to take place at an early day; Grace was intently following the direction of his finger, and Sir Thomas equally intent upon every varied expression that passed over her beautiful face. In her eagerness to observe more minutely the execution of the problem, she leaned forward, and one of her glossy ringlets reposed on the cheek of Sir Thomas. He feared to breathe, lest he might break the spell; but like a playful urchin, the tantalizing tress lingered there, as if to entangle still more in its flexure the susceptible heart of the ambassador.

The party, however, were suddenly interrupted by the visit of a personage who was announced as wearing the livery of the Opritchnina, and in some alarm the doctor received the worthy son of the Boyar Basmanoff, and Grace withdrew from the apartment.

With much obsequiousness did the Muscovite greet the ambassador, who was now re-

admitted to the favour of the autocrat. Observing the well-strewed tables of the secretary, he inspected with some curiosity their purport, and was gravely assured by Master Tuberville, that he was engaged in calculating the eclipse, which he had foretold, and which he had just satisfied himself would almost totally usurp the sun's meridian.

Hesitating whether to class the controller of the light of the sun with those who are affected by the phases of the moon, or those who, classed as magicians, are doomed to the regions of darkness, he shrugged up his shoulders in contempt of a knowledge he could not comprehend, and intimated to the physician that he was desirous of a private interview.

Sir Thomas, not without some strange misgivings as to the purport of his visit, which, singularly enough, were connected with his thoughts of Grace, returned with his secretary to their hotel, Jocko having betaken himself, uninvited,

to the private apartment of the young lady, as soon as she had disappeared.

It so happened that the door of the doctor's studio, not being fastened, the speculative curiosity of Pug induced him to invade the region of science, and there, to his wonderment, was the full-length skeleton of a human being, suspended on wires to the wall. Fortunately this subject entirely engrossed his attention, or it is likely, that if he had experimentalized unknown to the doctor in the admixture of certain drugs there displayed, the potion, when taken, would probably have shaken his patients somewhat more than the M.D. might have desired or calculated upon.

But the attention of Jocko was decidedly fixed on the structure of man. At first he gently handled the joints; then growing adventurous, he rattled them with as much amusement and satisfaction as if they were castanets, and

he were capering to the step of the Cachucha; when, lo! the skull, which surmounted the bony phantom, dislodged by the unwonted usage of its appertenances, was loosened from its position, and fell with a notable rap on the more sensitive scone of the tormentor. The empty one was evidently the harder of the two, and Jocko did not recover his self-possession till after sundry scratchings and distortions of countenance. But when reason, or instinct if you will, did return, the monkey had the advantage, and by way of moral, for "to what base uses may we not return," did the brute play at foot-ball with that ruin of the temple of the mind of man. It is certain, nevertheless, that the skull was in a fair way of being fractured, had it not proved that the lower parts of this article of science, which was kept for use rather than for show by the worthy doctor, had been secured by sundry fastenings. But it was astonishing

with what imperturbable gravity the monkey surveyed the ghastly wreck. We have been assured by grave authority, that medical knowledge has formed part of the acquirements of that race. Then may we not conclude, that not only was Jocko conversant with the component parts—with the foramina of the sphenoid or ethmoid bones, the meatus, the annulus, the cavity of the tympanum, or the auricular labyrinth; but that he was at home in the minutiae of the ossa nasi and palati, as he dived into the very recesses of the calvarium. Now, certainly, if Jocko was cognizant of the Grecian standard of the superiority of the human over the monkey cranium, it was then most evident that there was a woful difference between the species, to the disadvantage of the *simia*, of many degrees, in the facial angle. On the other hand, the sapient observer was comforted by a pleasing similarity in the occi-

pital foramen, whilst the total absence in the human skull of a certain characteristic projection on his own forehead was a satisfactory reflection, that the cranium of man was, to a certain extent, deficient, and consequently inferior.

How far and how long the scientific pursuit would have been continued by Jocko is not known. The skull and its appertenance the lower jaw, had been firmly connected with wires and springs, for the purposes of study, and the convenience of the doctor's observations. Herein peered our indefatigable philosopher, though somewhat too deeply, for the jaw giving way to his pressure, allowed his head to pass between the incisors, and the re-action of the springs approximating the upper and lower teeth of the skull, so effectually grasped the head of Jocko, as to render it painful for the student to extricate his pate from

this bony helmet. Thus entrapped, we leave the adventurer to the punishment sometimes entailed upon too great a thirst for knowledge, and return to the physician and his visitor.

“To what circumstance may I attribute the honour of a visit from the noble son of Alexis Basmanoff?” inquired the doctor, who, from some insight into character, was desirous to bring at once on the tapis the object of his visit, anxious not to prolong the interview one moment beyond the necessary discussion.

But such was not the intention of his companion, who, by way of preamble, conversed on politics, rumours, and news of the day, keeping the doctor at bay, who, not in any degree misled by his superfluous verbiage, patiently, and in the most monosyllabic manner, waited for the substance of his communication.

“Your daughter,” at length observed the

young Boyar, "caused much sensation at court; she is a very beautiful young lady."

Theodore Basmanoff paused, in hopes that his remark would have elicited from the doctor some sign of approbation or other, and thus have assisted him in introducing the purport of his embassy. Wilmington, however, neither moved nor spoke, but preserved the same calm gravity.

"Indeed," resumed his companion, "the Czarevitch was much struck with her appearance."

The doctor still maintained the same silent attention which from the first had disconcerted the Russian; and to rouse him from this apparent torpor the young nobleman now made, as he thought, a more pertinent remark.

"Methinks, doctor, had your daughter been a candidate for the throne of the Czarina, she would have been successful. Even now, the

Czarevitch is so prepossessed in her favour, that it would require little effort to supplant his new bride; and if my services in your behalf”

“ My lord, I am not wont to discuss family affairs, that are to me so deeply interesting, even with the confidant of a prince !” and the doctor, rising from his seat, ceremoniously requested to know the object of his visit.

It was in vain he sought to avoid the penetrating glance of the Englishman. Making, therefore, a virtue of necessity, he disclosed that it was at the instigation of the Czarevitch himself he had waited upon the doctor with proposals of marriage to his daughter, and that he was empowered to say that the prince was ready to repudiate his young wife, which was the only obstacle

“ Except my child’s assent,” quickly interposed Wilmington.

“ Which the high honour of an alliance with

the prince would, of course, secure," rejoined the young Boyar.

"Present my duty to the Czarevitch," interrupted the physician, reddening,—and now feeling that he was compromising his principles by further colloquy with the depraved minion,—“present my duty to the Czarevitch, and inform him that no *second* party shall be made acquainted with any resolution I may form concerning the future establishment and welfare of my only child. Your lordship has no further commands?”

The case was desperate, and the Boyar's son altered his tone.

“The condescension of my visit seems not fairly appreciated. My rank, methinks, should have secured me a more favourable reception; but empowered to treat in behalf of the prince, that should entitle me to your courtesy; and But he said no more. His eye became fixed; the paleness of death suddenly

overspread his countenance; the athletic form of the Opritchnina chief shook violently,—his teeth chattered,—and the hero of the butcher legion fainted. The doctor turned suddenly to seek assistance, and was himself staggered for a moment. A moving phantom was peering above the door of the apartment—a death's head, beneath which two living eyes were glaring, and Wilmington felt a chill creep over him even as he recognised the monkey covered with the skull.

Basmanoff the younger, after restoratives had been applied, was conveyed to the palace; and when he recovered his recollection sufficiently to recount his adventure, spread far and wide the report of the demoniacal proceedings at the house of Wilmington, and in that fertile age of necromancy and superstition, strange rumours were circulated of the haunted dwelling of the heretic, and of the conjurer's powers of predicting the operations of Heaven itself.

It was not without some difficulty that Jocko was released from the "jaws of death;" and Wilmington was much disposed to bestow upon him deserved chastisement, but Grace again interposed; and as it occurred to the physician that the monkey's prank might have the effect of distancing unwelcome visitors for the future, he took the whole in good part, whilst Jocko gained a surer footing than ever in his household.

CHAPTER XVI.

“When his good Queene Nastacia dyed, she was canonized a saint, and to this day worshipped in their churches.”—

PURCHAS, HIS PILGRIMAGE.

“Tout à coup la fiancée du tzar tomba malade et commença à maigrir d’une manière surprenante.”—KARAMSIN.

“Le tzar épousa la malade, espérant comme il le disait lui même, l’arracher à la mort par cet acte d’amour et de confiance dans la miséricorde du tout-puissant.”—IDEM.

ON the morning appointed for the nuptials of the Czar, all Moscow was betimes in motion. The goodly citizens were seen congregating, and descanting upon the virtues of the new bride of Ivan Vassilivitch ; for, strange to say, since her arrival the assassinations had ceased. Some few days of that era of blood had passed away harmlessly, unsullied by massacre, and the Muscovites again ventured abroad.

Even the Opritchnina, those privileged butchers, whose presence was death, and whose footsteps left the marks of blood, were quiescent, as if the name of Marfa Sabakin was a spell which held them in check. But the all-powerful cause of their forbearance was the change which had suddenly come over the royal executioner himself. He had paused in his career of blood to gaze upon an angel. Peace was in the lovely smile of his elected bride, and he felt its influence, like the fragrance of that eastern flower which enslaves the heart. The atmosphere around her breathed virtue, and the Czar, in her vicinage, inhaled the purity of her spirit.

The talisman, operating upon the monarch, had its corresponding effect upon the courtiers, from whom it descended upon every grade of lesser demons, and a holiday was granted to lacerated humanity. The good people of Moscow were bold to hope that the days of the

sainted Nastasia were come again. With the confidence which the aspect of the court inspired, they were seen, on that auspicious day, crowding the churches to invoke blessings on the head of the bride whose virtues held out the promise of salvation to their prostrated country, and thronging the avenues to the Kremlin, in festive attire, to obtain a glimpse of the gifted maid, who was the herald of hope and mercy to an empire.

Ivan, absorbed in his passion for the sweet enchantress, suspended the torture and gave rest to the sword. The new devices for the destruction of life (the incessant theme of the tyrant in his moments of repose) were laid aside. Ivan found their employment incompatible with love.

Then, he loved! He, the savage, who yielded to his ferocious soldiery the communities of cities, first to dishonour, then to massacre. He loved! His breast received the

consciousness that man is but “a little lower than the angels.” His thoughts turned heavenward. Aye! he loved—and the benign influence of that regenerating passion extended over the happiness and lives of millions, for the womb could bring forth none but slaves in the realm of Russia. His subject was his right, the breath of his nostrils, his property. He loved! for in the dawn of his new passion the memory of the past faded away, and Nastasia, for the first time, was forgotten.

He loved! the throned fiend! whose vengeance for the bereavement of his first love had outraged the laws of God and of man. His earthly idol was in his grasp, and the sacrilegious murderer flattered himself that Heaven would spare him now, nor drive him again to square accounts with his fellow-creatures, by the shedding of blood.

The monarch was at that period of life which, in a well-spent youth, is deemed the

prime; but the sensual enjoyments of him who lorded it over the land of Muscovy, had left him but the external semblance of manhood—an outward covering of inward disease and exhaustion of vital energy. These had made inroads into his frame, as into his mind; had sapped it of health, and left but the outward trunk, kept in motion by means of art. He was like the bulb of the poppy, all ashes within: yet was the eye deceived, and the daily stimulants which roused the dregs of his constitution deceived even himself.

The brain, however, was active, and imparted an artificial life to his powers. The memory of his youthful and virtuous passion for Nastasia, had survived her death. He beheld Marfa Sabakin, and all that unsated passion rushed to his heart, and earth and life seemed yet to have in store for him a joy.

The Czar wore a smiling countenance, and was clad in golden raiment, on the morning

of his nuptials. His person was decked with all the splendour which the imperial wardrobe and the jewel chamber could bestow; and the bridegroom had placed the refulgent crown of his empire on his brows, when Alexis Basmanoff presented himself, and bowed to the earth.

“I like not that look of ill omen upon thy face,” said Ivan, as he perceived the slave waited permission to speak. “We will not mar our present joy with evil tidings.”

“Your unworthy valet would speak of the bride——”

“Anon we come—so save thy breath; our ears would rather drink in the music of her voice than thine, honey it as thou wilt.”

“Beseech your majesty! the lady is in danger——”

The blood forsook the lips of Ivan, as he looked speechless in the Boyar's face, who continued—

“An awful paleness and lassitude have come over her, the flesh seems to waste even to the eye. In one short night, disease has made such ravage on her person, that she is unable to come forth. In truth, your majesty, it is most sudden. The leech, Bomelius, is in attendance.”

“So pale, sayest thou?—unable to come forth?—wasted in form? Bid all my physicians hasten hither. We will to her chamber,” continued the Czar, rising. “Harkye, Basmanoff, suspend the ceremony and the banquet. We will do honour to our chosen bride, as though she were already our wife.” Placing his hand upon the dignitary’s shoulder, he forthwith proceeded to the chamber of the sick.

Entering the apartment, the Czar suddenly stopped. A fearful change had come over the once blooming features of his chosen one; and though they were now lighted up by a smile, as the monarch appeared, Ivan saw again the

aspect of his beloved Nastasia, when she sickened and died.

“My gracious sovereign!” exclaimed the beautiful girl, dragging herself to his feet, “this sudden indisposition has overmastered me, else had my duty brought me to your side.”

The Czar raised her, and lovingly pressed her to his breast.

“Thou hast done wisely, my beautiful one, to care for thy health before all things else; and if thou lovest me, wilt do all thou canst to recall the roses that have played the truant from thy cheek.”

“My sovereign master, bear with me; 'tis but some trifling sickness—it will pass anon.”

“Nay, lie thee down,” said the monarch, as he supported her to the couch, with more of apprehension than he would have permitted the object of his solicitude to discover.

“See to her, Boyarina,” said the monarch,

as he turned to the wife of Basmanoff; “we will have nothing omitted that can restore that health, so precious to our love.”

Again he turned to the couch. The patient wore a grateful smile for her sovereign. Although sickness had robbed her of the hue of health, it had spared her beauty. The pale transparent skin seemed to impart to her eye a more intense brilliancy. The Czar gazed in rapture, mingled with fear. All the intensity of the love he had borne to his departed Nastasia revived, whilst a fearful apprehension took possession of him, as he contemplated the ravages of a few hours' sickness upon that pale cheek.

He sat long with her hand pressed in his own. There was a sacred—a holy feeling found its way to his heart with his growing passion. Yet did fearful anticipation possess him. Death had once robbed him of every joy—the sepulchre had closed upon every hope—with

Nastasia were inhumed even the virtues of Ivan. Marfa appeared to recall them from the tomb; and the Czar, as he gazed on the death-like features of the sufferer, remembered all that inexorable Death had once wrested from him, for ever.

“But no!” as he started at the sound of the distant clarion, that triumphantly proclaimed the approaching ceremony. “No! death shall not rob me of my bride;” and his eyes rolled wildly over the phantom of his love: and now a dark suspicion first came into his mind, that human wickedness had more to do with that wasting life, than the decrees of Heaven.

“Thou shalt be mine!—mine this hour! were thy nuptial-bed thy bier. Mayhap this proof of my devoted love may recall her drooping spirits.” And he invoked with earnest prayer, that Heaven, he had so long outraged, to look down with mercy upon his suffering bride, to restore her to health, and

to his arms. He ordered the nuptial ceremony to be performed in the chamber of the dying girl.

The grand hall of the Kremlin was filled with the mightiest Boyars of the realm, assembled there to assist at the ceremonies and festivities consequent upon the marriage of the Czar. Stationed along each side of the apartment, and seated on a treble tier of benches, ranging along the walls, they formed a dazzling assemblage of pomp and wealth. Their costume, as peers of the empire, was well calculated to impress the beholder with reverence and admiration. The throne was vacant; but the body-guard, stationed on the steps thereof, were in readiness, as if the monarch was momentarily expected; and their silver hatchets, held out as if prepared to strike, represented well the character of Ivan the Threatener.

At the foot of the throne was a seat, occupied

by the Czarevitch. He was superbly dressed, whilst, at that moment, the levity which usually displayed itself in his looks and manner, seemed to have deserted him : his gravity, assumed or not, imparted to him a dignity by no means natural.

Officials were continually passing to and fro ; and the whispers, in which were delivered the bulletins of the health of the new Czarina, were from time to time audible. There was a courtly display of grief and consternation, well got up and sustained, which for the time gave to the assembly a degree of solemnity rarely observed.

The bells of the thousand steeples of Moscow were in commotion. The avenues to the Kremlin were choked with citizens in high excitement. Gay troops of horsemen were arriving from all quarters. A jubilee announced the marriage of the Czar.

The apartment appropriated to the perform-

ance of the ceremony, was the chamber of the future Czarina. The bride reclining on cushions, which from her weak state were indispensable, was magnificently attired. The floor of the apartment was covered with velvet and damask. Before her was a table covered with a white cloth, upon which was a plate containing bread and salt. The Czarevitch occupied, for the time being, the "place d'honneur;" and at the appointed hour, sent for his majesty. The messenger, approaching the Czar, thus solemnly addressed him:—"Lord—go where God calls thee." Hereupon, the Czar, followed by the high officers of the court, entered the apartment. Having paid his devotions to the images of the saints, the Czarevitch vacated the seat, and the Czar took possession of it. While the customary orisons were repeated by officiating priests, the *Tisiatsky* combed out the hair of the Czar and of

his bride. The nuptial tapers, enveloped in skins of the martern, and encircled by numerous rings, were then lighted; and the bride was presented with a cap and veil.

In each corner of a triangular salver of gold, were deposited some hops, zibeline skins, pieces of velvet, of satin, and damask, and nine pieces of silver. Whilst the wife of the Tisiatsky threw the hops over the bridegroom and bride, others fanned them with the skins of the martern. The witness for the Czar, after making the sign of the cross, distributed roast meat and cheese; and the witness for the bride gave scarfs to all her suite. Then the Boyarinia handed a cup of wine of Italy to the metropolitan, who presented it to the monarch and his princess. Both having drunk, the bridegroom dashed the glass to the ground, and trod it to pieces. After the ceremony, the married pair received the felicitation of the

metropolitan, the princes, and the Boyars, whilst the appropriate hymns resounded through the Kremlin.

Nor were the minutiae of the ceremony forgotten. The ancient custom of suspending, from perches in the four corners of the apartment, small loaves of bread, with zibeline skins, was observed. Around, upon benches, were vessels filled with hydromel. At the head of the bed hung a representation of the Nativity, the image of the Virgin of Vladimir, and a crucifix; and the posts of the bedstead stood upon seven-and-twenty ears of wheat.

But the Czar mercifully interposed, to spare every exertion and fatigue possible to the bride; and the ceremony was curtailed of all that could be dispensed with; and now that they had all departed, he anxiously sought to secure her rest. The effort had been too great for her strength, and the Czarina fainted in the arms of her husband and sovereign.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ C’était par des coups souvent répétés qu’ils témoignaient leur amour à leurs épouses, et ces tristes victimes aimaient dit-on, mieux encore être battues qu’indifférentes.”—LEVESQUE, HIST. DE RUSSIE.

“ When there is love between the parties, the man sendeth unto the woman a small chest or boxe, wherein is a *whip*, needles, &c.”—HAKLUYT.

THE loss of rank was a great falling-off to the young and beautiful Katinka, the supposed heiress of the name of Basmanoff. She who had aspired to a throne, was now not worthy to pass the threshold of the Boyars. But born in a country where women were but the slaves of their lords and masters, she had been taught obedience betimes, and Maluta Skuratoff re-

ceived from the illustrious house of the Basmanoffs his resigned, submissive bride.

Maluta was at least distinguished from the army of assassins, by a degree of frankness, and honest avowal of the profession of chief headsman to his majesty. A very Russian in his blind obedience, the knife of the exterminator seemed one with the arm that wielded it. The space between the autocrat's decree of death and its execution, was, like the thunder after the lightning's flash, instantaneous. The signal given, the deed was done. No hypocrisy ever marked his duty. The Czar was his God; and had his idol ordained the extermination of the inhabitants of Moscow, the task performed, he would have slain himself to fulfil his master's decree "à la lettre."

Of such materials were formed too many of the blind instruments of the autocrat. How shall we else account for the reign of a monster,

whose atrocities leave far behind the crimes of every despot who has weltered in the blood of his people. Was the regicide of that day only to be found for the great Valois—was there no Ravallac to sweep from the earth that curse of humanity, seated on the throne of Muscovy?

Alas! for the disgrace of mankind, historians have been found to distort the annals of the day, and to transmit the name of Ivan to posterity coupled with that of "Great." The venal slaves should have felt his iron sceptre. It is matter of astonishment that a panegyrist could be found of him who was wont to say—when he violated the most holy laws of nature and society, respected not the grey hairs of age, the helplessness of infancy, paternal love, filial piety, or weak and defenceless females that "his subjects were honoured by his leavings." The slaves bowed to the monster. The outraged rights of humanity called forth no avenger; so

that we are tempted to exclaim, (as the Roman, "This world was made for Cæsar,") that Russia was made for Ivan.

That Maluta Skuratoff was formed for his master, seems to be borne out by his never having forfeited his favour. Wealth poured in upon him, till his magnificence equalled the display of the mightiest of the realm; and if Katinka forfeited rank and title, nevertheless the splendour that awaited her in her husband's house, surpassed that which her exacted bridal vow resigned.

And he, the low-born, the spurned, of the menials of the palace, had imagined he had made the house of Basmanoff his stepping-stone to title. He fondly hoped that even they, when their indignation was abated, would promote his preferment, in order to conceal his plebeian origin, by the mantle of rank.

Exulting in his good fortune, and bearing himself now as if on an equality with the

noblest of the land, Maluta returned from the palace on the day of the glorious pageant, escorted by his troop of the Opritchnina. Encountering on his road the Basmanoffs, he assumed an equal right of way, when Theodore, spurring his charger, ordered him to rein in.

“Now, by St. Serge, good brother!” exclaimed Maluta——

“Brother not me, thou slave! and keep thy distance—kin art thou none of mine! for know, proud upstart, no daughter lives of the Basmanoff house! the thing thou hast wedded was the adopted offspring of a serf—a slave!” And the proud scion of his ancient house goading his steed, dashed past the wonder-stricken Maluta Skuratoff.

If the Czar’s favourite yet doubted the truth of those words, he had no sooner entered his own house, than the confirmation of the metropolitan, whom he found there, accompanied by a female, who corroborated his

statement, at once brought conviction to his mind—and Katinka sank to the level of the ignoble-born Maluta.

The mystery of the affair was soon cleared up by Youry, who in female garb accompanied Philip; but it was no solace to the mind of Katinka that the menial should prove her parent, and her mortification and grief were excessive.

Maluta Skuratoff found his young wife bathed in tears; but they were of water, and he who was a daily witness of them in blood, was in no way affected by these. On the contrary, he was in a ferocious mood, owing to the taunting declaration that had been made to him of the real parentage of his bride.

And pardon, gentle reader, that we are compelled to touch upon a national peculiarity—it is that of the use of the scourge. If the sins of men, “unwhipped of Heaven,” denote an unholy people, then may we grant to the

land of the Russian, the name of holy Russia ; for assuredly no nation existed where transgressions, of every sort and size, were “purged away” so completely by sound thrashing, as in that country ; all classes then enjoyed the salutary application.

The boor and the labourer were whipped by the steward and the tradesmen—who were whipped by the merchant and the soldier—who were whipped by the little Boyars—who were whipped by the great Boyars—who were whipped by the Czar—the only one who escaped, who most deserved whipping.

Now, when we consider the system in all its bearings—when we have the evidence of all the writers of that day, that stripes were actually the bonds of society in holy Muscovy, that the slave unwhipped was considered without the pale of social community, shall we wonder that the occasional application of a little castigation, was hailed by the ladies in Russia as a

proof of true love. The omission of it was their misfortune, for it implied indifference: an offence, considered by all ladies of an unpardonable nature. Much of human happiness depends upon viewing things in their true light. We may, therefore, presume that the social position of the Russian fair, was not altogether without grateful feelings; and that they duly appreciated those marks of kindness, bestowed by their loving husbands, and were much edified by such forcible and striking tokens of their regard.

That Maluta Skuratoff should have been in the humour to bestow such proofs of his affection "à la Russe," at the moment, when he discovered that his claims to a noble alliance were unfounded, is not a matter of surprise; and Katinka acknowledged the proofs he gave with becoming grace, and with her voice pitched sufficiently high, for all her depen-

dants to hear how far her connubial happiness was complete.

If the flogging proved some solace to Katinka in her present distress, we must likewise do Maluta the justice to say, that by the time he had ceased wielding the whip, his wrath towards Katinka had much abated: another proof of the beneficial effects of the flagellating system, the tendency of which seemed not only to rouse the dormant affections, but to dispel the evil passion of wrath in the breast of the operator.

After such unequivocal proof of her husband's regard, it was not long before Katinka felt perfectly at home in her new domicile; and, notwithstanding the disappointment of her husband in her rank of birth, the very best understanding now existed between them.

Maluta, after all, soon discovered that the élève of the Boyarinia Basmanoff, was no mean

acquisition as a help-mate. Her ambition was ever pointing out the means of acquiring wealth and advancement ; whilst a deep scheme which she had at heart, readily found a willing ear in Maluta, as it opened a road to revenge, for the contumely cast upon them by the proud and hated race of the Basmanoffs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Il lui écrivit une lettre que son fidèle serviteur, l’unique compagnon de sa fuite, se chargea de remettre lui-même—

“ Il trouve le tzar a l’entrée du palais—

“ *C’est, lui dit-il, de la part de mon maître maintenant exilé, le prince André Kourbsky.*” Le tzar, transporté de courroux, lui donne dans les jambes un coup de son bâton ferré, et le sang coule de la blessure. Immobile l’envoyé garde le silence, tandis qu’ appuyé sur ce baton, Jean se fait lire la lettre.”—KARAMSIN.

It was no chimera, no dream ;—the Czarina was in danger ;—Ivan could no longer deceive himself. It came upon him with a fearful reality that subdued him, an oppressive weight seemed to bow him to the earth ; he dreaded the solitude of his thoughts, yet the banquet was forsaken, the carouse—the wine. The

brightest day of his life was setting in the darkest cloud. But his fears were not wholly confined to the Czarina. Tidings of such alarming import from the theatre of war had reached him, that the haughty monarch trembled. The Poles had invaded Russia. The defection of his bravest Voyvode had been announced to him. Kourbsky, that brave and faithful soldier, who had earned, by unnumbered wounds in glorious battle, the hero's laurels, was secretly informed that his envious master had enrolled his name in the list of the doomed; and he who had encountered death in its thousand shapes on the battle-field, blushed to shed his life's blood on a scaffold. The despot had cancelled his allegiance; and his devoted wife sacrificed all her earthly happiness to favour his escape, and parted with him for ever.

A faithful slave of the Voyvode presented a letter from his master to the Czar, at the entrance of his palace, saying, "From Prince

Andrew Kourbsky, now exiled." The Czar instantly struck him on the legs with his iron baton, from which the blood issued. Motionless and silent, that servant stood; whilst Ivan, supported on that dreadful staff, listened to the reading of the letter. It began—

“ Sovereign,—Once illustrious, and blessed
“ of God, but now, for the punishment of our
“ sins, filled with infernal fury, corrupt to the
“ inmost recesses of the heart,—Tyrant, to
“ whom the earth offers no parallel, listen to
“ me!

“ Skilful in forging calumnies, thou givest to
“ thy faithful subjects the name of traitors,
“ and to Christians that of enchanter. In
“ thine eyes virtue is vice; the light to thee is
“ turned into darkness. Is it for this we have
“ conquered the kingdoms of Bati, where our
“ ancestors groaned in cruel slavery? Is it
“ for this thy faithful and brave generals have

“ destroyed the fortresses of Germany, and
“ covered thy name and reign with glory? By
“ thy cruelties, thou hast forced me to abandon
“ holy Russia! My blood once shed for thee,
“ calls to Heaven for vengeance. Dost thou
“ think thyself immortal? Is there not a God,
“ and a supreme tribunal?

“ I have scrupulously examined my conduct,
“ but cannot discover my crime towards thee.
“ Under my command, thy battalions have
“ never turned their backs on the enemy.
“ During many years, I have suffered want and
“ sickness ; far from my wife, my children, and
“ my country. Count my battles and my
“ wounds! I mean not to boast, but God
“ knows all, and to him I appeal.

“ Adieu ! thou wilt see me again at the awful
“ day of judgment. Those whom thou hast
“ murdered are near the throne of the Sovereign
“ Judge, and demand retribution. Thy armies
“ cannot save thee !”

Ivan having listened to this letter, ordered the messenger to the torture, in order to obtain a confession of the supposed secret agents and partisans of Kourbsky.

Treason was at length in the camp; a Russian had deserted his colours. The Czar at once perceived the full extent of his danger; but the remedy was sure and easy—the extirpation of his slaves.

Nevertheless, he was humbled. His power was no longer unbounded; the world was wide enough, and man could live and defy his vengeance. The autocrat trembled with rage at the reflection.

He moved along, abstracted, muttering to himself, breathing hard, as if the atmosphere was too oppressive; and as he waved his hand to remove all obstruction, the Boyars obeyed, like shades receding before the light, and the very breath of their nostrils was suppressed.

Now the door leading to the apartments of

the Czarina was opened; this recalled Ivan to another distressing truth, the illness of his beloved Marfa. He stood speechless, gazing with searching eye at Bomelius, who knelt before him.

“ Her majesty sleeps.”

“ Sleeps ! sleeps !” echoed the Czar ; “ but will she awake—will she ever awake ? will those soft eyes ever unclose again, to bless me with their light ?”

“ Great lord ! the symptoms are more favourable,” interposed the courtier, whose ready tongue inclined to falsehood ; and who deemed it a privilege to deceive princes with flattery.

“ I dare not believe thee ! Tell me,” said Ivan, “ thou that canst steal away wholesale, the vital spark, where is thy boasted science, if it cannot restore some of that vitality which thou hast snatched from the hearts of thousands ? Couldst thou but infuse a little life into the ashes of yon expiring flame, doubt not,

good Bomelius, it would go far to square accounts for thee when thine is fleeting. Restore my Marfa to health, and I will make a prince of thee."

The Jew turned pale, for sovereigns are not pledged to secrecy; he had just been proclaimed a murderer.

"My liege, despair not," said the physician, for the voice of the Czar echoed the desolation of his spirit. "Beseech your majesty," continued the doctor, still at his feet, as the thought meantime crossed his mind, that he might turn the current of his wrath into another channel. "'Tis possible the Czarina is bewitched."

In that benighted country sorcery held more than imperial sway over the mind of man—it enslaved the monarch of Muscovy. With a greedy ear he listened to the insidious suggestion; it crept to his heart, that abode of wickedness and cruelty, gave energy to his despair, and the thought was the doom of death to those

who had been spared by the fortuitous accession of his young bride; his passionate love for her had, for a few hours, suspended the blow of the executioner's axe.

The tyrant was himself again, as, with glistening eye, dilated nostril, every sense seemed awakened at the intimation.

The rush of conflicting suspicions fired his blood. Demons held high revel in his brain, as he led the way by the red-stairs to the Belvedere, closely followed by the Jew, the courtiers holding back at a more than respectful distance.

“’Tis sorcery, then—the work of man be-
develed—I have it! But we will put a stop to
their enchantments. Maluta!”

The head butcher was at his feet.

“The relations of my deceased Czarinas are
too numerous, we can well dispense with
Prince Michel; Yakolef; his brother, Basil;

Sabourof; Soltikof—" the Czar ceased speaking, and Maluta vanished; his duties had begun again.

These summary orders appeared materially to have relieved the monarch's mind. Reclining on a divan, his gaze was unconsciously fixed on the vaulted roof of Heaven. Night was fast stealing over all, and the twinkling stars, like little heralds of celestial glory, were hastening to their posts; as dimpled smiles they gladdened the eye, with the very language of hope and love, and, like beacons to the forlorn, they seemed to beckon man to a better world.

He mused long, his eye steadfastly raised to the glorious canopy. A concatenation of ideas, as he communed involuntarily with the lights of heaven, recalled to his mind the prediction of the English astrologer. He started.

"When prophesied this visionary Englisher that the eclipse would take place?"

“Your gracious majesty, methinks such prophecy idle nonsense, the fancy of a sick-brained boy,” remarked the physician.

“We questioned not thy thoughts on the subject, but thy memory as to the time.”

“Saint Isaac’s day, my liege,” hastily answered Bomelius.

“He said that it foreboded revolution,” murmured the Czar, as he thought of the defection of his brave Voyvode.

But no observation was made by the courtiers; it was a ticklish point.

“Proclaims the invasion of huge armies,” repeated Ivan, and the news of the invasion of the Poles coupled itself in his mind with the prophecy.

Bomelius was still silent.

“It menaces princes and great kings,” muttered the Czar, and he trembled with dread for himself and his bride.

His courtiers shook, as if seized with an ague fit.

“Off to the embassy, and to our presence bring this stripling necromancer. We like not these tokens.”

CHAPTER XIX.

“ A cette époque parut une comète dont la queue avait la forme d’une croix. Le tzar s’étant rendu, pour la voir, sur l’escalier rouge, l’observa long-temps et dit à ceux qui étaient près de lui : voilà le présage de ma mort !”—KARAMSIN.

“ Note, that a great blazing star, and other prodigious sights, were seene a moneth together, every night, over Musco that yeere.”—SIR THOMAS HORSEY’S OBSERVATIONS.

FEAR ever supplied the Mercuries of the Czar with the wings of speed ; and it was remarkable with what alacrity the corpulent and long-coated Boyars sped on their missions, more particularly when his majesty was not in the most amiable humour. A whole posse of the like gentry had taken to their heels at the

sovereign's command, outvieing each other in dispatch; they arrived very speedily, panting, puffing, and blowing, at the English embassy, to summon Master Tuberville to the immediate presence of the Czar.

It must be admitted that Sir Thomas Randolph was not without qualms for the safety of his favourite secretary, and would have refused obedience to the command, but for the fear of compromising the interests committed to his charge; and, moreover, he was fully aware that his friend would not have absented himself under any pretence that could have implied a doubt of his capabilities of self-protection.

But much to the wonderment of all parties, Master George was no where to be found. Yet none had seen him leave the house, and all the household boldly affirmed that only a few minutes before he had been quietly gazing from his window. Here was a fresh shock to the nerves of his majesty's messengers. Evidently

the astrologer had the power of making himself invisible; and much to the amusement of the English party, the well-fed Boyars huddled together, like so many frightened children, scared by ghost stories and hobgoblins.

Communicating their fears to each other, they recounted the miraculous veracity of the secretary's prophecy, related the story of a living skeleton that haunted the heretic's abode, and the feats of a certain personage with a tail, whereupon they fell to, praying and crossing themselves in their own defence against the evil one and his machinations.

But if they forgot their master's commands in their tribulation, he had not forgotten them. Impatient of their delay, another troop of messengers succeeded to the first; and as one dread superseded the other, they now, though quaking at every step, proceeded in quest of the astrologer.

Their search might have proved long fruit-

less, had not the voice of Tuberville himself proclaimed him near, as he called upon the ambassador to join him. A new mystery—the voice came from above, yet there was no upper story, and it might have fared but indifferently with that of the poor Muscovites, had not Sir Thomas now recollected that his learned secretary had of late, much after the fashion of Jocko, betaken himself to the roof of their abode, to further his scientific research amongst the luminaries of his Muscovite majesty, ever since he had received the royal permission to inspect them, and consequently, was soon enabled to produce the subject in demand, who, on learning the nature of the commands that awaited him, in very plain English, sent his majesty somewhat before his time to more appropriate dominions.

Descending from his observatory, he was proceeding to acquaint Sir Thomas with a very extraordinary phenomenon in the heavens,

when he was most unceremoniously hauled away to the palace, the diligent Boyars urging his speed, not in the most delicate fashion, and he was in the presence of majesty, as soon as if Asmodeus himself had given him a lift from the roof of the hotel to the roof of the palace.

The Czar felt a degree of awe in the presence of the astrologer; it was the triumph of science over barbarism.

“Young man!” slowly spoke Ivan, “thy beardless chin denotes an age which boasts not much experience, nor is thy frame favoured with manly comeliness. Thou lookest not endowed by nature with the common share of manhood, yet thou dost presume to cope with knowledge, far above the reach of my stoutest Boyars.”

“By your majesty’s favour,” mildly answered young Tuberville, looking satirically towards the messengers, who had urged him

along so unceremoniously, "in my country we carry not our brains in our bellies."

Ivan frowned, but the sceptre of knowledge was more than a match for the rod of power, and its spell was on him.

"Thou dost prophecy," continued Ivan, softening his tone, "that the eclipse will be on St. Isaac's day?"

Tuberville bowed in the affirmative.

"Since thou art favoured by invisible powers, and holdest communion with celestial things, say, is thy science and thy influence such, that on promise of largesses for the boon, thou couldst intercede, and turn away these signs of wrath; we will requite thee nobly for thy pains."

George Tuberville was not prepared for such claims upon his favour; indeed he felt rather awkward, for the requests of monarchs amount to commands, and he was somewhat in the predicament of the nurse, who could not stop

the baby's crying for the moon which it had seen in a pail of water.

Ivan anxiously watched the countenance of Tuberville, which fortunately betrayed no lack of gravity. He was, however, some moments in concocting a reply, and the Czar, interpreting his silence into consent, began to hope.

“I crave your majesty's pardon,” said Tuberville, who really laboured under some degree of fear; “my humble knowledge extends not beyond those means which a mysterious power has left only to prove our insignificance, by a knowledge of the circumscribed view that man takes into the depths of the firmament, which is like the limited horizon of the naked eye, a step beyond his standing place. Even now, great Czar, there comes a meteor that baffles science. The learned are at fault, and aspiring sages exclaim—Great Heaven! what is this?”

“A meteor, sayest thou; what is that?”

“Behold!” said Tuberville, as he turned and pointed to the sky, and there a blazing star was seen, with the appendage of a huge cross of fire, sweeping in luminous train, before a galaxy of little stars. It was the phenomenon he had first hailed from his observatory, when he was so summarily called away, and which had augmented in light and magnitude as the darkness increased.

All eyes were turned towards it; the Czar sprung from his seat, a cold dew crept over him, big drops of perspiration fell from his brow, the terrible iron staff trembled in his hand.

“Mortal or demon!” he exclaimed, as he recovered his speech, “say! has thy craft conjured that fearful light. Speak! what bodes that blood-red luminary? Speak! I charge thee!”

“Much, say the wise——”

“Mince not thy words—all, all, would we know.”

“The comet is forerunner of evil.”

“To whom?”

“To the wicked, great Czar!”

“Prove thy words, or by the living miracles it shall bode death to false prophets.”

“The past alone can furnish me the proof; again, mighty Czar, I solemnly aver, I am no prophet. Yet, if my reading serve your purpose, know that all great events have been proclaimed by strange and fearful signs.”

“Stay not to fashion thy words with ceremony; say on!” and his eye ranged with rapidity from the astrologer to the comet, from the comet to the astrologer.

“Briefly then, your majesty. A mighty luminary proclaimed the deluge of the world. Aye, the learned have asserted, was its cause. For its appulse and rapid motion near its

perihelion, attracted the atmosphere of this earth, and burst the subterraneous waters.”

The Czar listened as if he did not doubt the *parabola* of our astrologer. Tuberville resumed—

“A comet was seen to usher in the bloody reign of Nero, and one predicted his end.”

Ivan grew paler.

“One lighted the Emperor Arnolphus to his grave,” continued Tuberville, almost unconscious of the presence of the Czar, as his memory laboured for the facts of history; “and in the eleventh century, the death of Poland’s king was presignified by the star of destiny.”

Ivan was sick at heart.

“When Wladislas of Hungary was slain by Amurath, there shone in heaven a fiery brand; and one of saturnine hue blazed at the death of Alphonso of Arragon.”

Ivan gasped, to bid the astrologer cease, but his speech failed him; and Tuberville, who was on his high horse, the spur of a good memory quickening his speed, rattled on. "The Tartar invasion, anno domini 1500, when he ravaged Muscovy with fire and sword, was noted by a comet of 'incredible bigness.'"

The Czar was sinking, and the Boyars rushed to support him; but Tuberville, who, with professional interest, kept his eye upon the comet, observed nothing sublunary, and continued—

"A mighty meteor was the forerunner of the glorious Reformation of the English Church; and when Cranmer died, there blazed a light of splendour. For Democritus hath said, that comets are the souls of famous men, triumphing in heaven."

The Czar attempted to speak. Tuberville continued—

“The recent star in Cassiopea, that reigned for months in the heavens, was the precursor of the Parisian massacre, on St. Bartholomew’s day.”

“And of the death of Lewis,” aspirated Ivan.

“Your majesty has said.”

The Czar once more raised his eyes to the portentous sign over his head: it had increased in light and size, as if in its progress it swallowed up the minor stars to feed its flame.

“It presages my death!” exclaimed the Czar, in a sepulchral tone, and swooned.

The loving courtiers grouped around their monarch, and Tuberville, seeing the coast clear, slipped away, more in dread of the earthly Jupiter and his satellites, than of the threatening luminary he had descanted upon, and hastened home to announce the event, and deliver his *parabola* to a more intelligent

audience, as well as to emulate the practical observations of Tycho Brahe, his most profound contemporary.

CHAPTER XX.

“ Un pierre sepulcrale en marbre sur laquelle se trouvait une inscription, mystérieuse et inexplicable, était tombée du ciel—

“ La foudre avait embrasé la chambre à coucher de Jean—

“ On avait entendu aux environs de Moscou une voix terrible qui criait fuyez, Russes !”—KARAMSIN.

“ Le festin sanglant de la tyrannie n'était pas encore terminé, et nous allons voir s'ouvrir un nouveau théâtre d'horreurs.”—IDEM.

“ Des méchants ont fait périr, par leurs sortilèges, Anastasie ma première épouse ; la seconde, princesse tcherkesse, également empoisonnée, à expiré au milieu de douloureuses convulsions.”—IDEM.

CONSTERNATION prevailed throughout the city. All Moscow had witnessed the terrible omen in the skies, in dismay. Fearful sounds, contemporaries affirm, were heard that night.

A voice of thunder resounded in the ears of the distracted citizens, and warned them to escape.

In the palace, a sepulchral tablet was found, with a mysterious inscription engraven thereon, said to have fallen from heaven. A thunderbolt struck the wing of the palace whither the Czar had retired, and fired his chamber; it recalled the monarch to himself. But wherever he turned, the dreaded beacon of fate—the comet—met his eye.

The fears of Ivan were in some degree shared by the court. The comet presaged disasters to all Russia, and the superstitious belief took firm root in the minds of the Muscovites. They dared not offer solace, who stood so much in need of confidence themselves.

In that benighted age, when even England bowed beneath the influence of sorcery; when the fires of Smithfield blazed beneath the bodies

of unfortunate wretches, yclept witches and magicians, shall we wonder that Ivan had recourse to the mockeries of divination?

The revelations of Tuberville had at length awakened terror in the breast of him who had never inspired any other sentiment throughout a whole nation. Magicians were not infallible, and hope might yet steal in to belie their prognostication of evil, but the past was irrevocable. Perhaps, from their mystic lore, he might purchase assurance of his personal safety at least, and at once his orders were issued, to summon immediately all the notorious witches and prophets in his empire.

Couriers were dispatched in quest of them, to the furthestmost confines of Russia. The famed fortune-tellers of Krasnoyarsk—the infuriate *Chamans* of the Baschkirs,—the sorceresses of Siberia,—the *Chorinziennes* of the Tungusch, and a host of savage impostors, that carried on the occult science in the northern

districts of Colmogra and Lappia, were hurried by main force to the presence of the Czar; and in a brief space of time, no less than sixty of these fiery beldames were posting it to Moscow.

Nor were the Mongol *Burättes* and *Bakschi* overlooked, whose knowledge of the aspect of stars had acquired for them the celebrity of prophets; and Ivan yet looked forward to their favourable predictions, with a ray of lingering hope. As the morning advanced, and the bright beams of the sun dispelled the phantasms of darkness, exhilarating all living things with the growing light, the monarch's thoughts turned to other cares, and he sought the apartment of his bride.

The nuptial chamber had resumed its wonted stillness. The Czarina had recovered from her swoon, but she looked like one released from the tomb. So wan, so wasted—a week had seen her the blooming and successful

competitor for the hand of her sovereign, and, ere its close, the hand of death had touched her lovely form, and marked her for his own.

It was the office of the Boyarinia to watch over the dying bride, to approach her person, and to perform the tender offices of a nurse; nor did she weary or flag, and often the afflicted maiden would turn upon her a fond and grateful look.

The wife of Basmanoff had much altered in appearance, if not in manner, since the first night that her now dying charge was confided to her care. Her restless eye, ever wandering from, yet ever returning to, the all-absorbing object of her thoughts, to mark the steady progress of her disease, seemed to search for the solution of some hidden secret of the grave, in the rapid, yet measured decline of her youthful sovereign. She had marked the rounded limb wasting day by day, and the transparent blue of her eye grow more deep

and brilliant. She had heard the murmuring voice of the sleeper communing, as it were, with the visionary inhabitants of another world, anticipating that heaven in joyful hope. Sometimes a strange reminiscence of her childhood seemed to steal upon her, and she would give utterance to things of by-gone days.

'Twas thus, on the night before her nuptials, the Boyarina was startled by some incoherent expressions, but so unconnected—so marvellous—so difficult to unravel, that when the sleeper woke, in vain she strove to gather her meaning. It was remembered no more.

By night, by day, the Czar was at her side, his hope that she would live not relinquished; for he felt for that gentle creature an intensity of fondness, such as he had known but once. It was a lofty feeling, shedding a sacred influence o'er his soul, regenerating the sinner's

heart. So changed was he in action and deportment, in those few days, that good men prayed for Marfa's life, as the boon of Russia's salvation.

The victim herself was resigned, for she was one of the few who could face approaching death, and smile upon its terrors. Her short career on earth, like the path of an angel of light, shed a radiance on the future as it had on the past; and with such happy serenity as may be a mortal's fate, she was completing her short visit here, preparatory to an eternal one—to another and a better world.

Some thoughts, as she looked back upon the world, would arrest for a moment her heaven-bound spirit. To her mind's eye a warrior's form would suddenly appear, bearing in his hands a glorious diadem, with which he hastened to encircle her brows. And then she dreamt of angels, and of assemblies of

heavenly spirits. These anon would vanish, and she felt herself chained to earth; and starting from sleep, would behold the Czar clasping her hand, and chafing it with warm kisses to bring back the fleeting life's-blood. In that struggle of the soul for emancipation, the virgin wife of Ivan, as she turned a look of sorrow and gratitude upon his love, was yet thankful for the grave that would save her from a union fraught with misery, although surrounded with pomp and glory. Once she whispered the name of the lovely daughter of the English physician, and the Czar anticipating her wish, commanded the presence of Grace Wilmington, whilst, with the name, flashed o'er his distracted mind the remembrance of the profound science of him who had once laid open the secrecy of the art of Bome-lius, and had declared the insidious cause of the death of its victim. No trace of poison

was visible in the person of his expiring bride. Yet might another demon live who, for revenge or ambition, might have encompassed her death; and with the suspicion came such a direful vow of vengeance on the whole human race, that upon the life of his wasting empress seemed to depend the existence of Russia's sons.

In an apartment adjoining that of the Czarina, was a being to whose habitual smile the heart was a stranger. Hypocrisy had long sundered the connexion between them. He was pacing softly to and fro, peeping, at the sound of every approaching step, to ascertain each visitor to the chamber of the sick. Occasionally he entered it, and with much apparent gravity felt the pulse of the young empress, then ominously shook his head. Need we name Bomelius?

Beside the couch of the Czarina stood the

untiring matron, ever present, ever attentive, ever awake; the Czar himself became sensible of her devotion to his bride. No stranger was suffered to perform services for the sick. Who could doubt the loyalty of the Boyarinia Basmanoff, or put an adequate value on her self-devotion?

If the palor of death was on the features of Marfa, the rouge that was daily renewed on the cheek of her attendant, masked a hue as ghastly, though less fatal. If her eye was not so sunk, there was a leaden fixedness there which, whilst it shunned that of her charge, inspired the beholder with a feeling of dread, for which he could not account. The vivacity of her manner, the buoyancy and pliability of her person were gone, and her heavy step supported a mere automaton, soulless—spiritless. In her fevered brain was centred all the business of her existence—the past, the pre-

sent, and the future; and there, in its ceaseless throb, was a burning hell. The sense of its action was like the heaving up of her scalp; the over-wrought pulse seemed bursting, and raving madness, the last refuge from this overwhelming pressure of thought.

When Walter Wilmington and his daughter were announced, the Czar, after commanding the English physician to be brought to him previous to his visit to the Czarina, left the chamber, as Grace was admitted, and found him with the Dutch physician in the adjoining room. Bomelius had been watching the Englishman's approach, and with extreme courtesy greeted him as his daughter was led to the apartment of the Czarina. He had put on a deplorable look as he sought a parley with his rival in science; but his majesty interrupted the colloquy, and at once brought forward the subject of his distress.

“The disease,” observed Bomelius, in that low tone which would imply a serious apprehension of the danger, “the disease has baffled me.”

“What are the symptoms?” inquired Wilmington.

“None but those of gradual decay.”

“Judge for thyself!” exclaimed the impatient monarch; “if thine art can reach the seat of her disease,—restore her to life—to my love—the reward shalt thou thyself name, and were it the brightest jewel of our crown, it shall be thine. But deceive me not, Wilmington; if ’tis some nefarious deed has robbed me of my wife, I charge thee, as thou dost set a value on thine own life, to let me know it. My last hope is in thy skill.” And the Czar, overcome with grief and anxiety, was supported to a seat, whilst Walter Wilmington hastened to the chamber of the sick.

There was a restlessness of manner in the Jew, which at another moment would scarcely have escaped the observation of his master.

“My liege,” observed Bomelius, with an insinuating softness of voice, “methinks your majesty has seen no cause to suspect an attempt upon the life of the Czarina, so closely has she been watched by thy most devoted slaves. And yet my thoughts involuntarily turn to one well-known enemy to thy peace, who has, nevertheless, access to the halls of my great lord.”

The monarch sprung from his seat.

“My enemy! and he lives! Now, venal slave! could we make carrion of thee for keeping from our knowledge the breathing thing that had it in his power to hurt and yet approach us——”

The Jew knelt at the feet of the Czar.

“ Great Czar ! thou knowest him well to be thy bitter foe.”

“ Speak ! nor keep my brain in torture one moment longer—or thou shalt cease to wag thy tongue to all eternity !”

“ Philip, the metropolitan !” whispered the Jew.

The monarch stood motionless, gazing in silence on the crouching slave, his chest heaving with difficulty from the sudden weight upon his heart.

“ Philip !” he at length slowly ejaculated.

“ ’Twas he forbade the bans—’twas he denounced thee in the temple !” hurriedly spoke the Jew, as he marked infernal hatred gathering in the looks of the Czar, and his wrath now fairly charmed away from his own head. “ When, after the ceremony of the Eucharist, the prelate left the chamber of your then healthy bride, an expression of self-congratula-

tion was visible in the wrinkles of his face. Methought there was mischief in it; and, beseech your majesty, pardon the thought, it came unbidden to my mind, that he might have been trusted too far. Pardon, O supreme Czar! the watchful devotion of thy slave!—the consecrated wafer might have been steeped in”

“ Hold! hold! thou damned abortion of an infidel. The rack tear piecemeal thy infernal heart—” and the Czar, overpowered, sank back on the seat, muttering half intelligible imprecations, overwhelmed by the abhorred suggestion of the unbeliever, yet opening his ever suspicious breast to a belief of the hellish deed.

At that moment a step, hurried, yet unsteady, approached, and the Czar encountered the horror-struck face of Wilmington. From the corner [of his eye, Bomelius watched the

interview: it was a silent one, for a few seconds. Ivan dared not break that silence. There was yet a hope, a chance, for his passion; as yet she lived—and the Englishman, in one short word, could slay his last hope of joy on earth, could give love and anticipation of years of happiness.

That word is spoken. Ivan closed his eyes, as if the world had nothing left to look upon with love again.

A dark cloud obscured the future, a dreadful void was felt, and the link which held him to his kind seemed for ever broken. Life was bereft of its charms. He lived no longer to virtue. Darkness and despair filled up the measure of his existence, for Walter Wilmington had pronounced his wife—his empress—irrecoverably poisoned! Dreadful was the conflict of his soul. This bereavement led him by natural and consequent steps to the supposed

authors of his calamity. As love overthrown, is followed by deadly hatred, so the new-born virtues of the Czar, suddenly blasted in their birth, turned to dark suspicion and revenge.

END OF VOL. II.

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